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Official Records

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Tuesday, 28 October 1997, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 120 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/52/350/Add.5)

The President: I should like to draw the General Assembly's attention to document A/52/350/Add.5. In a letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communications dated 16 and 29 September and 6, 8 and 14 October 1997, Togo has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter. May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 29

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/456)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.9)

The President: The conclusion, on 24 July 1996, of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is the oldest of all the parliamentary organizations, signified a very encouraging development which, to my mind, will continue to acquire ever-growing importance. Moreover, the agreement is very attuned to the spirit of the ongoing United Nations reform and thus should be further strengthened.

During the current session, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/7 of 25 October 1996, we will have to elaborate further steps for the practical implementation of that agreement. There is no doubt that our discussion will concentrate on, among other things, the issue of providing this cooperation with a modern and adequate framework.

I now call on the representative of Spain to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.9.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Since this is the first time that I am addressing the General Assembly at this session, may I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to its presidency. I hope that you will continue to show throughout this session the excellent leadership that you have exercised over our work during these first weeks.

It is a source of great satisfaction for me to address this meeting of the General Assembly under agenda item 29 to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.9 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

97-86326 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

This draft resolution is sponsored by 88 delegations, which is solid testimony to the importance that Member States accord to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In addition to the Member States listed in the draft resolution, other States have joined the list of co-sponsors: Burkina Faso, Gabón, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Niger, San Marino, Singapore, Jamaica, Chad, Kuwait, Turkmenistan and Djibouti.

There is no doubt that cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union has grown significantly since the conclusion of the cooperation agreement on 24 July 1996, leading to the joint undertaking of various activities by the two organizations. The preambular paragraphs of draft resolution A/52/L.9 echo these positive developments, which are set out in detail in the timely report (A/52/456) submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 51/7, which was adopted by the Assembly last year without a vote.

Both the Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Seoul last April and the session in Cairo in September attest to these positive developments. In Cairo, a member of the Spanish Parliament, Mr. Miguel Angel Martínez, succeeded an illustrious Egyptian, Dr. Ahmed Fathi Sorour, as President of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, whose Executive Committee is currently composed of members of the Parliaments of the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Jordan, Iceland, India, Estonia, Argentina, Italy, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Poland and the Russian Federation.

For all these reasons, as well as the strengthened cooperation endeavours between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Pierre Cornillon, and the members of their staffs, for their efforts in support of this cooperation.

Draft resolution A/52/L.9 recalls in its preamble the importance of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In its operative part, it notes with appreciation the increased cooperation between the two organizations; recommends that this cooperation be further strengthened, at a time when the United Nations is preparing to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century; requests the Secretary-General to submit a further report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session; and decides to include this item in the provisional agenda of its next session.

Therefore, and since the draft resolution has no budgetary implications, I would like to propose, on behalf of all the co-sponsors, that the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.9 be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Ahamed (India): It is a great privilege to speak in support of cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations. The important initial step of establishing a framework of cooperation between the two organizations, with the conclusion of the cooperation agreement on 24 July 1996, has opened up important new possibilities of mutually beneficial cooperation. That the signature of this agreement was followed in quick succession by the conclusion by the IPU of similar cooperation agreements with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is adequate testimony to the validity of the principles underlying the need for closer interaction between the IPU and the United Nations and its specialized agencies. We need to pool our resources and our experience to devise common plans of action to address our shared concerns.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union includes representatives of the people, untrammelled by their affiliations to a particular political ideology or belief. They come from both the Government and the opposition, providing a unique flavour to our deliberations. The Union thus represents, better than many other forums, the diverse will of the people in the true sense of the term.

The Secretary-General, in his report contained in document A/52/456, has stated that parliamentarians are a key group and that national parliaments have a major role to play in the pursuit of the goals of the United Nations. I would like to express my full support for this statement and to assure the Secretary- General that the parliamentarians are alive and responsive to the concerns of humankind. They will contribute to ensure effective implementation of the goals of United Nations conferences and summits and the shared goals of creating a world characterized by diminishing injustice and increasing happiness, and promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The possibilities of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU are enormous. Some of them have been detailed by the Secretary-General in his report and deserve our commendation. Our cooperation for the promotion of peace and security, and for the promotion of democracy and to follow up on major United Nations conferences and summits, must be intensified and enriched to the benefit of humankind. Promotion of democracy at all levels is the key area in which the experience of the IPU could be effectively utilized by the United Nations and its specialized agencies or funds and programmes. The recent adoption by the IPU of a Universal Declaration on Democracy at its meeting in Cairo in September earlier this year could guide our common endeavours.

Full participation of women in all aspects of economic and social life of our peoples and their political empowerment is one of the guarantees of democracy. As a country devoted to social uplift, India has enacted significant socially emancipating legislation, including reservation of one third of the seats in locally elected municipal and village-level bodies, the *panchayats*, through constitutional amendment. This has brought to the fore a critical body of women, more than a million strong, which is now taking charge not only of the lives of their families, but also of entire villages and municipalities in my country.

India also organized a specialized conference of the IPU on partnership between men and women in politics in New Delhi from 14 to 18 February 1997. It brought together an equal number of men and women from over 80 parliaments and intensified our efforts to highlight gender issues, particularly in the political sphere.

I recall the message to the Conference by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, who said that the Conference

> "marks an admirable step forward in our joint efforts towards a goal we all share: achieving the equality of women and men in politics, in decision-making and in all other realms of human endeavour".

My delegation is therefore happy to note that the specialized conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union hosted by India has been followed by other joint initiatives of the United Nations and the IPU in this field. The invitation extended by the Commission on the Status of Women to the President of the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians to its 1997 session, as a part of a panel on women in decision-making, deserves to be commended. The utilization by the United Nations of the database of women in politics, prepared for the New Delhi Conference, is also a welcome step in our mutually enriching cooperation.

A word about the interaction between the IPU and the United Nations. India has always believed that participation of members of Parliament — from both the Government and the opposition parties — in the meetings, conferences and summits of the United Nations is necessary to impart to the United Nations the diverse will of "we the peoples" that the United Nations represents. Indian delegations to all regular and special sessions of the General Assembly, as well as to the conferences organized by the United Nations, have included members of our Parliament. In addition, our Parliament also takes an active interest in the deliberations of the international community in this forum and promotes national legislation for the social and economic betterment of our people in line with international deliberations, in particular the World Summit for Social Development.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU requires for its continued success an effective, vibrant, modern and reformed United Nations, responsive to the concerns of the vast majority of its Members, the developing countries. We are therefore supportive of the recent measures that the international community is considering to revitalize and strengthen the United Nations. However, reforms cannot be a substitute for the provision of adequate resources to the United Nations to carry out its mandated tasks. They cannot be simply a cost-cutting exercise. In this context, I recall that several conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union have called on the international community to provide the United Nations with the requisite financial, human and technical resources. We hope that these will soon be forthcoming.

To conclude, may I once again express my delegation's happiness at the present stage of cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. I hope that this cooperation will be further intensified and strengthened in the coming years. India will be willing to play its part in the process in the belief that it is not only our endeavour and our commitment, but also our duty, to strengthen a better and prosperous global society through strengthened international cooperation for development. It is in this context that I commend to the Assembly the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.9 and sponsored by a large number of our delegations.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): My delegation is a sponsor of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In this regard, I endorse the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Spain as he introduced the draft resolution under consideration.

Let me begin my brief intervention by expressing my appreciation to the Secretary-General for document A/52/456, which provides a clear account of the concrete activities of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

We can see from that report that the Inter-Parliamentary Union is actively promoting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations at the regional, subregional and international levels. The Inter-Parliamentary Union, which is made up of elected representatives of the peoples of the world, is, in a significant way, helping to bring the ideals of the United Nations closer to the world communities. This is all the more true given the fact that national delegations to various meetings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union draw representation from both governing and opposition parties.

In his concluding remarks in document A/52/456, the Secretary-General has rightly observed that the Parliamentarians are a key group within the constituencies that are acquiring growing importance to the United Nations and which warrant special consideration. The Secretary-General goes on to conclude that the Inter-Parliamentary Union has a major role to play in the pursuit of the goals of the United Nations. Against that background, it is the hope of my delegation that the draft resolution before us will meet with the unanimous approval of this Assembly.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is a privilege for me to take the floor in connection with the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in support of the advancement and deepening of a process that is opening up new prospects for international cooperation.

May I express the appreciation of my delegation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the President of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Miguel Ángel Martínez of Spain, for their efforts to strengthen and intensify the relationship between the two organizations. I wish to extend this appreciation also to the Republic of Egypt for its continued outstanding contributions in that respect.

The signing of the agreement between the two organizations on 24 July 1996 made possible the establishment of a definite starting point for a growing cooperation between both organizations, which will bring us closer to the purposes and objectives of both organizations. The goal is to embark on a path that will lead to the strengthening of the United Nations and contribute to the consolidation of democracy within States — issues to which Argentina attaches special importance.

In that connection, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General, which outlines Inter-Parliamentary Union support on important issues. This includes good offices in Cyprus and support for activities towards the worldwide prohibition of anti-personnel landmines. In the sphere of the promotion of democracy, we are pleased to note that the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been providing the United Nations with increasing support in the form of technical assistance and advisory services for national parliaments.

Such cooperation also encompasses follow-up to major United Nations conferences. The Inter-Parliamentary Union participated in the preparations for and the holding of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the 1997 meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Based on a 1996 study carried out by the IPU, the General Assembly has been given a worldwide assessment of parliamentary action on the implementation of Agenda 21.

Draft resolution A/52/L.9 is perfectly in keeping with an international scenario geared towards the goals of representative democracy and the parliamentary movement. For all those reasons, Argentina has joined in sponsoring the draft resolution just introduced so lucidly and eloquently by the representative of Spain and supported by the representatives of India and of Zambia. We are convinced that in this way we can contribute to furthering the common ideals that unite the international community.

Mr. Yakovlev (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The purposes set out in the statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) — to unite parliamentarians to secure the broad participation of States in the strengthening of international peace and security, in the firm establishment of representative institutions and in the defence of human rights — are

largely consonant with the aspirations of the United Nations.

The relationship between the two organizations is a long-standing one. For years, IPU representatives have taken an active part in major events of the United Nations and of bodies in the United Nations system. The annual New York meetings of parliamentarians members of delegations to the General Assembly have become a good tradition and have opened up a new dimension in the dialogue with the United Nations. We applaud such contacts at other major international events organized by the United Nations, such as the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo, the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing. Feedback too is important; here I cite the increasing number of international and regional meetings of parliamentarians with the participation of specialized agencies of the United Nations.

The cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, signed in July 1996, marked a new stage in the relationship between these two authoritative international organizations and gave powerful impetus to their efforts to improve and broaden their cooperation. This is particularly important given the ongoing process of reform of the United Nations, one important area of which is the strengthening of cooperation between the Organization and civil society. The IPU can make a contribution to this process as well.

Among the areas of practical interaction between the two organization is in the provision by the United Nations of technical assistance and consultative services to the national parliaments of countries that require such assistance. The close contacts between the IPU and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are beginning to yield concrete results, and I note that the UNDP is providing financial support to the IPU for its programmes to encourage effective governance. We can expect similar results in the light of recent agreements between the IPU and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Human rights, the environment, drugs, armed conflict and other challenges to State and individual security are the focus of attention both in the United Nations and in forums of the IPU.

The 100th Inter-Parliamentary Conference, to be held in 1998 in Russia, will be no exception. This is the first time the Conference is being held in our country, and Russian parliamentarians expect important new initiatives to enhance links and cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. The fact that the Conference is to take place on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be an important catalyst for ideas and proposals, in heightening our sense of responsibility for protecting the value of the human person, and in ensuring security for all individuals. That was the thrust of the decisions taken at the recent Cairo Inter-Parliamentary Conference.

The association of the IPU with the main areas of United Nations activities is having a good effect also on regional and subregional interaction among parliaments. The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which meets regularly at Saint Petersburg, has provided experience in questions that have taken on high priority for the United Nations. Despite its relative youth, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly has proven itself as an active participant in international processes and as an organization that can make a real contribution to resolving serious problems of peace and security, including efforts to eliminate pockets of tension in Abkhazia, the Transdniestr region and Nagorny Karabakh.

The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the CIS has drawn up and adopted model procedural and executive penal codes and model legislation for combatting organized crime. This clearly shows that the CIS is implementing the relevant recommendations of the United Nations. The Inter-Parliamentary Assembly is establishing and developing contacts with other inter-parliamentary organizations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Nordic Council.

Saint Petersburg, traditionally known as the northern capital of Russia, is preparing to celebrate its 300th anniversary. It continues to play its historical role in bringing together peoples and cultures. Its citizens are not indifferent to efforts to combat one of the most terrible of threats: the threat to the environment, one which is difficult to discern at first but which is horrific in its consequences. It requires the immediate formulation and implementation of a whole set of measures that can prevent the destruction of all life on Earth.

As the Governor of Saint Petersburg, I wish to inform the Assembly of my city's new "Green Helmets" programme, which includes the establishment of specialized units to combat ecological dangers. This, we think, is not only an urgent task, but also the moral duty of mankind.

Ms. Ramiro-Lopez (Philippines): Last year, during the fifty-first session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/7 which, among other things, welcomed the conclusion on 24 July 1996 of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). That agreement brought to fruition the longstanding desire of my Government, and that of others as well, to strengthen, increase and formalize cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU.

The cooperation agreement has proven to be an important step towards opening up new areas of cooperation, complementarity and mutually reinforcing action between the United Nations and the IPU to address global problems. It also reaffirms the IPU's continuing support and affirmation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and the need to promote international cooperation in meeting the global challenges of humankind.

In this regard, the cooperation agreement has proven to be a catalyst for United Nations-IPU cooperation, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on this item which was requested in resolution 51/7. Cooperation has been expanded to key global issues such as international peace and security, promotion of representative democracy and follow-up to major United Nations conferences on development issues. The Philippines was particularly pleased at the support given by the IPU to efforts to secure a worldwide ban on anti-personnel mines.

The IPU, in its recent Cairo meeting, also adopted recommendations for parliamentary action with regard to child labour, commercial and other forms of sexual exploitation of children, and the protection of children in armed conflict. These will undoubtedly contribute to United Nations and country efforts in combating these matters. The IPU, through various proposals and activities, has also reinforced United Nations efforts to promote the status of women and their participation in political life.

The recent actions I have cited serve as important illustrations of the fact that United Nations-IPU cooperation has great potential in addressing key areas of global concern.

The increasingly important role of civil society in promoting international cooperation should also be promoted through the vehicle of United Nations-IPU cooperation. For what better way can the will of the people be expressed at the international level and in the United Nations than through the IPU, which consists of representatives elected by the people? At the same time, what better way than through the IPU is there of disseminating issues considered by the United Nations to the grassroots level? These are not rhetorical questions but, rather, a view that I hope will soon be injected into the mainstream discussions on global issues and problems.

Finally, the Philippines strongly supports enhancing United Nations-IPU cooperation, and we recommend to the General Assembly the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution on this item, of which my country is a co-sponsor.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): It gives me great pleasure to address agenda item 29, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is an organization of national parliaments which represent their people within the structure of a State. With its membership of no less than 137 national parliaments from every region of the world and a wide spectrum of legislatures, the IPU represents a broad range of the world's collective public opinion.

As we all know, the members of national parliaments enact national laws and supervise the activities of their Governments. As States become more and more interdependent, parliaments are playing an increasingly important role in the formulation of national and foreign policies, including those dealing with international cooperation. They deliberate on treaties, incorporate international laws into the national legal system, and influence the conduct of their Governments' foreign policies.

Since its foundation in 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has made an invaluable contribution to the spread of representative democracy and the promotion of peace throughout the world. Its activities have sought to maintain peace, to strengthen democracy, and to promote human rights and freedoms, all of which are also the goals of the United Nations.

With such like-minded objectives, my delegation believes it is only natural that the IPU and the United Nations should seek closer cooperation with one another. Together, both organizations carry enormous weight in international affairs, and closer coordination between them will only improve their efficiency and their ability to reach those common goals.

Since the parliamentarians are in constant contact with the citizens they represent, we also believe that closer United Nations-IPU collaboration can do much to ensure that the will of the people is clearly expressed at the international level.

In this respect, we are pleased to note that over the past year there has been considerable progress in the efforts of both organizations to seek closer ties of cooperation. We particularly welcome the agreements reached by the IPU with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/52/456). It is our hope that inter-institutional coordination can be further strengthened through the conclusion of additional such agreements between the IPU and other members of the United Nations family.

As we are all aware, the United Nations is in the process of making strenuous efforts to adapt itself so as to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century more effectively. Last July, the Secretary-General put forward his proposals for United Nations reform in document A/51/950. In that document, the Secretary-General emphasized that the parliamentarians are a key constituency of growing importance to the United Nations.

We share that view, and we are convinced that national parliamentarians working together at the international level have a major role to play in helping to realize the goals of the United Nations. We believe that the international community should bear in mind the need for mobilizing the political will of parliamentarians as the deliberations on United Nations reform continue.

In this context, it is worth noting that the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held last April in Seoul recognized the need for national parliaments to support actions to be taken by the United Nations through its adoption of a resolution entitled "Cooperation for world and regional security and stability, as well as for respect for all forms of the sovereignty and independence of States".

Furthermore, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/52/456, many of the other resolutions adopted in Seoul — on sustainable development, the implementation of Agenda 21, and regional conflicts — also stressed the importance of cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations in dealing with pressing global issues.

Indeed, the issue of cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations was one of the underlying themes over the course of the one week session of the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference, which brought together in Seoul 572 members of parliament from 118 countries and representatives from 25 observer delegations. We welcome the clear statements made by both the United Nations and the IPU of their intentions to strengthen the cooperation between them, and we look forward to those intentions coming to full fruition.

My delegation is pleased to sponsor the draft resolution on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". We look forward to its adoption by consensus by the General Assembly. Finally, allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the delegation of Spain for the leading role it has played in submitting this important draft resolution.

Mrs. Ben Yedder (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Since its establishment at a difficult period of time, the United Nations has worked tirelessly for peace. It has also helped to pave the way for national liberation movements in every region of the world. It has directed much of its work towards economic and social development and the improvement of standards of living. In order better to respond to the demands of the international community, the United Nations has constantly reformed itself in order to discharge its lofty mission as an agent for change and progress for the nations and peoples of the world.

The aspiration to universality and the all-encompassing nature of the mandate of the United Nations make it a unique and indispensable forum, giving Governments the opportunity of working together to undertake common endeavours to mobilize the energies and resources necessary to implement the actions agreed upon. The power of the Organization to bring people together has produced outstanding results in the most diverse areas, including trade and development, the environment, human rights, the progressive development and codification of international law, equality of the sexes

and equality within the population, peace and security, and disarmament.

The Organization has strengthened its presence through the creation of specialized bodies on which it has conferred a responsibility to support international efforts to combat illiteracy, poverty and disease, thereby consolidating the foundations of international peace and cooperation and opening up the best routes to bring progress in all its dimensions within reach of all the peoples who seek it. This approach has been reflected in the conventions, acts and agreements that the United Nations has brought about in various fields, with a variety of intergovernmental organizations, international institutions and regional organizations.

It is in this context that I pay tribute to the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union for the cooperation agreement concluded by them less than two years ago, on 24 July 1996. Our consideration of agenda item 29 on cooperation between this intergovernmental organization — the Inter-Parliamentary Union — and the universal Organization gives me a welcome opportunity to refer in this Assembly to some of the positive steps taken by both organizations in this framework in the domains of the promotion of peace and security, the promotion of representative democracy and, finally, the follow-up to major United Nations conferences.

With regard to the promotion of peace and security, the first aspect to which I will refer relates to the substantive contribution of the IPU to United Nations efforts for a global ban on anti-personnel landmines. To that end, throughout 1996 and this year, the IPU has considered the steps it might take to help ban these mines and conclude a treaty binding on all States members in this area. The IPU has also continued its efforts at the parliamentary level to help in the pacification and normalization of conflict situations in many countries where civil peace has been seriously disrupted, whether in Albania or the countries of Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has at the same time continued, as in the past, closely to follow the situation in Cyprus. But the area in which the IPU has made the most obvious contribution is doubtless that of the promotion of representative democracy. To this effect, the Union has been cooperating by providing technical assistance to the United Nations to help the parliaments of developing countries to strengthen their structures, in Africa as well as in Asia and Latin America. In 1997, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the IPU sponsored a Parliamentarians' Forum that brought together members of parliaments from some 75 countries. At its last general conference, which was held in Cairo from 11 to 16 September 1997, the Union contributed to the efforts of the United Nations to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Specifically, this took the form of a resolution calling for measures to provide support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This text also called upon parliaments to ensure the ratification of international and regional human rights instruments. The parliamentarians undertook to work to harmonize national legislation with the standards contained in international instruments with a view to their full implementation.

The Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Cairo provided a good opportunity to adopt recommendations to protect children in armed conflicts. The focus of the meeting was directed to important questions relating to children, such as child labour and the exploitation of children. In the same crucial area of the promotion of representative democracy, the IPU has also just adopted a Universal Declaration on Democracy. This sets out the basic principles of democracy, as well as standards for the exercise of democratic government.

The third area on which parliamentarians focused their interest in 1997 was that of follow-up to major United Nations conferences. I am pleased to note in this regard that the activities of national parliaments in this area are in keeping with the focus of the United Nations. Indeed, at its nineteenth special session, devoted to the consideration of Agenda 21, the General Assembly stressed that in order to promote participatory processes in the area of economic and social development, the participation of national legislative assemblies was indispensable. In this area, we can only welcome the contribution made by parliamentarians at the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, and the various events that resulted from it. In 1996, the United Nations and the IPU took joint measures to follow up and implement the texts that emerged from the World Summit for Social Development. To this end, in September 1996, UNDP and the IPU organized a meeting in New York during which participants identified priority measures to address poverty eradication, the attainment of full employment and social integration.

Another important area I should like to mention is the promotion of women and the participation of women

in political life. Parliamentarians played an active role during the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference on Women, with many activities, focusing on, *inter alia*, the participation of women in political parties and electoral processes and their role in national parliaments.

More recently, on the occasion of the World Food Summit in 1997, the Inter-Parliamentary Union held a Parliamentarians' Day meeting, organized jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It dealt basically with the lack of food security, its root causes and follow-up to the outcome of the Summit. The Union adopted a Declaration in support of the Summit and announced that it intended to set up a mechanism for parliamentary follow-up of the commitments made in Rome.

The increasingly active participation by parliamentary representatives in international affairs, which I have already outlined, is constantly gaining strength and being reinforced along the lines established by the United Nations in order to lend new impetus to the participation of civil society in international activities. This interest is reflected in a tangible way through the resolutions adopted by the IPU at its recent Cairo session — resolutions which cover the strengthening of links between parliament and the people to ensure sustainable democracy and subjects as diverse and crucial as jobs and globalization, the protection of children, the principles and elements of universal democracy and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

My country is proud to take an active part in the work of the IPU. We strongly support cooperation between it and the United Nations, and we are happy today to see the new dynamism that the Union has given to its relationship with the United Nations family, a dynamism reflected in the increase in cooperation agreements between the IPU and the specialized agencies. I refer here to the recent agreements concluded with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

We agree with the Secretary-General's statement in his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union that national parliaments through the IPU

> "have a major role to play in the pursuit of the goals of the United Nations" (*A/52/456, para. 20*).

Mr. Fulci (Italy): Italy is among the sponsors of the draft resolution before us, and wishes to add its voice to those who have already expressed strong support for this document. The draft notes with appreciation the increased cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and recommends that this cooperation be further strengthened at a time when the United Nations is preparing to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The Permanent Representative of Spain, Ambassador Inocencio Arias, introduced the draft resolution in the most clear and comprehensive way. We are particularly grateful to him for having succeeded in collecting about a hundred sponsors — 15 more than last year. Given this high, extraordinarily large number of sponsors, we are confident that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The report (A/52/456) of the Secretary-General, submitted pursuant to last year's resolution, indicates that cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has been even more strengthened since the conclusion of the cooperation agreement on 24 July 1996. The report also gives several examples where the two organizations now undertake joint and mutually reinforcing action, particularly in the fields of the maintenance of peace and security, promotion of representative democracy and follow-up to major United Nations Conferences. Italy welcomes these developments. National parliaments are called on to play an ever- increasing role in international cooperation. We must never forget that the ideals of democracy that Parliaments embody should inspire and govern relations not only within States, but also between States. Italy is particularly attached to this value, and sees the IPU as a key organization in affirming democracy in today's international community, as well as, of course, within the United Nations system.

We note with deep appreciation the results of the IPU Conference held in Seoul in April 1997. On that occasion, the IPU adopted a number of important resolutions dealing with United Nations matters, in particular, security issues and emergency situations, such as those prevailing at the time in Albania and the then Zaire. Moreover, we would like to praise the IPU's support for the campaign to secure a worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines.

With regard to the promotion of representative democracy, the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has already produced highly significant results, especially in the areas of the participation of women in political life — and we were delighted that

several ladies addressed the Assembly today — provision of technical assistance and advisory services to parliaments, good governance and the protection of human rights. In this latter respect, the IPU meeting in Cairo last September was particularly important, since it set the basis for concrete initiatives aimed at ensuring prompt ratification by parliaments of international and regional human rights treaties, national implementation of international human rights standards and the protection of children. Moreover, the IPU adopted in Cairo a Universal Declaration on Democracy, which contains the basic elements for the exercise of democratic government, and addresses the international dimension of democracy.

The record of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the follow-up to major United Nations conferences is equally impressive. It shows how much the cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations can benefit both institutions. The report of the Secretary-General recalls the various IPU initiatives aimed at fostering the implementation of the results of the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the 1997 World Food Summit, held in Rome. Parliaments were encouraged to adopt legislation to comply with the commitments made at these conferences, and mechanisms were set up to monitor parliamentary action in the areas concerned. Needless to say, this is an invaluable contribution by the IPU to United Nations activities and, ultimately, to reaffirming and implementing the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the full support of Italy for the action of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the further increase of its cooperation with the United Nations, based on last year's agreement. The ideals of freedom and democracy, of which parliaments are the highest expression, remain the best guarantee of this partnership's lasting success.

Mr. Elbaradei (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): For the third year in a row, the General Assembly is debating agenda item 29, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", in order to consider the contributions that have been and will be made by the two organizations. The aim is to promote this cooperation so as to ensure active participation by all parliaments in supporting the United Nations in all its fields of activity, whether political, social or humanitarian, as well as in peacekeeping operations, preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peace-building.

I am pleased to congratulate Mr. Miguel Ángel Martínez on his election as President of the IPU Council during the successful IPU Council meeting held in Cairo. I wish him success in his presidency, and hope he will achieve optimum cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations. I also wish to pay tribute to Mr. Ahmed Sorour, Speaker of the Egyptian Parliament, for his constructive efforts during his term of office as President of the IPU Council in supporting its activities, and especially for his initiative of laying down the cornerstone for cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU — the subject we are considering today.

Furthermore, I wish to recognize the untiring efforts of Mr. Pierre Cornillon, Secretary-General of the IPU, to enhance the performance of the IPU and to expand and deepen its cooperation with the United Nations system.

In its resolution 51/7 of 25 October 1996, the General Assembly welcomed the cooperation agreement concluded between the United Nations and the IPU and considered that the signature of the agreement represented an important step for increased and strengthened cooperation between the two organizations. The report of the Secretary-General on this item (document A/52/456) shows that cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU has been strengthened since the conclusion of the cooperation agreement, and the ensuing period has witnessed several examples where the two organizations now undertake joint and mutually reinforcing action.

Before I speak to the substantive aspects of the report, I wish to express the appreciation of the delegation of Egypt to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his comprehensive report on this item, and for his unremitting efforts towards promoting cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. Let me pay tribute as well to the efforts made by his predecessor, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to develop the general framework of this cooperation through the agreement on cooperation between the two organizations.

During the Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Seoul in April this year, discussions were held on security matters in general and their relation to the promotion of international peace and security, and on emergency cases in Albania and the then Zaire, the Cyprus problem, peacekeeping operations in Haiti and the global banning of anti-personnel landmines. These are all vivid examples of the potentialities of effective cooperation between the two organizations. Since the IPU

has taken the initiative to discuss these issues and has lent its support to the United Nations in these areas, in our view it is important that the IPU continue to support the United Nations with regard to other issues, especially those chronic problems where conflicts within a single nation preclude the United Nations from playing its due role — in Afghanistan and Somalia, for example — and other issues. Such issues would undoubtedly benefit from participation by the parliamentarians in their settlement and thereby facilitate the role of the United Nations in the performance of its mandate.

In the same context, the adoption by the IPU Conference held in Cairo in September 1997 of five major documents aimed at supporting the activities of the United Nations is a move that stresses the concept of cooperation between the two organizations. The Universal Declaration on Democracy, based on a joint study conducted by the IPU, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and a panel of international experts, is indeed an inter-parliamentary precedent that deserves to be built on. The same goes for the adoption by the IPU Council of resolutions recommending parliamentary action to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The IPU has called upon parliaments to provide support to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and also recommends parliamentary action regarding child labour, commercial as well as sexual exploitation of children, and the protection of children in armed conflict. All of these resolutions are geared towards supporting the activities of the United Nations in these areas.

The efforts by the IPU in the areas of environment, development, food and agriculture, social development, and the advancement of women also show that we are embarking upon a broad array of areas of cooperation between the two organizations. Such cooperation should be strengthened and utilized with a view to the attainment of the common goals of the two organizations.

Last year, we participated in the IPU meeting held at the time of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. A key theme was the efforts of the United Nations in the promotion of democracy.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The IPU held another meeting last July on sound management in the interests of democracy and justice. If by our presence here we stand as clear symbols of democratic action in all our countries, it would indeed be difficult for us to speak of these issues that relate to democracy when we feel that the place that is acting as host to our meeting, which represents all nations of the world, itself lacks democratic practices, especially in one of its primary bodies, namely, the Security Council. Here, we are have serious concern with regard to some of its resolutions, resolutions that lack the criteria of democracy owing either to the lack of balanced representation of all the world's continents, or to the use of the veto power which we have seen exercised or threatened, counter to the unanimity among other Council members.

We all know that the United Nations has no power to act other than within the provisions of its Charter. We therefore call on all Member States to seriously consider the possibility of amending the Charter in order to conform to the international circumstances of today which diverge completely from those which prevailed at the time of adopting the present Charter. Such amendment would serve to put an end to the frustrations felt by the peoples of the world who find that practices which are devoid of democratic norms rob of their substance the noble goals around which they have rallied to establish the United Nations. Consequently, the credibility of the decisions and performances of the United Nations, the largest of international organizations, will be missing.

Furthermore, we, as parliamentarians, view with grave concern the non-implementation of the principles and standards provided by the United Nations Charter with regard to breaches of international peace and security, in a manner characterized by justice and objectivity, that is without applying selectivity and double standards in dealing with similar cases. This is one of the extremely sore points that have harmed the credibility of the international Organization over the past few years. We are aware that the challenges facing the United Nations have recently multiplied and diversified. In addition to international instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and environmental spheres, there is an increase in areas of tension and conflict both among States and within States. Outbreaks of ethnic, tribal and factional conflicts, the heightened threats of the weapons of mass destruction, the spread of terrorism and the increase of its scope, as an international phenomenon — all endanger democracy, human rights and international peace and security.

Given that proliferation of challenges, the parliaments of the world must manifest their concern with the issues on the agenda of the United Nations, such as disarmament, development, the protection of women and children, the protection of the environment, as well as special problems relating to reform of the United Nations and the ways and means for Governments to contribute to dealing with those problems.

In addition, it is incumbent upon parliaments of States that have not fully paid their financial obligations to the United Nations to take action aimed at the fulfilment of these obligations on time and without conditions, so that the United Nations may carry out its tasks.

Moreover, I specifically propose that "challenges facing the United Nations and how to deal with them" be the topic of discussions in all the world parliaments this year. This would cause members of these parliaments to press their Governments to make additional efforts to assist in facing these challenges. Such a debate would undeniably have great importance in strengthening public opinion in favour of United Nations efforts aimed at the attainment of its goals.

The Egyptian Parliament recognizes the importance of strengthening the role of the United Nations in all areas of its operations. Notwithstanding the concerns I have expressed with regard to certain aspects of the United Nations work as members of the Egyptian Parliament, we shall always stand squarely behind all efforts aimed at enhancing the United Nations effectiveness and making it more democratic.

Ms. Tan (Singapore): It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the Singapore delegation on this agenda item, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/52/456). I would also like to thank Mr. Inocencio Arias of Spain for introducing draft resolution A/52/L.9.

More than a year after the signing of the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on 24 July 1996, my delegation is pleased to note that significant progress has been made in strengthening the cooperation between the two organizations. The list of concrete steps and actions elaborated in the Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is impressive. We are especially pleased that cooperation has extended to action in favour of the participation of women in political life, which is at the core of the IPU's work to promote representative democracy. Another new area of cooperation which we welcome is the increasing support received by the United Nations from the IPU in the provision of technical assistance and advisory services to parliaments at the request of national Governments.

As the IPU is an organization with a membership of 135 national parliaments, it is not surprising that it has sought closer participation with the United Nations. The ties between the two organizations, particularly in the areas of peace, human rights and democracy, date back to the establishment of the United Nations itself. On the basis of the shared objectives of the United Nations and the IPU, closer cooperation would only facilitate the work of parliamentarians and empower the work of the United Nations.

The key to United Nations-IPU cooperation is complementarity. The United Nations recognizes that it is not a world government. After all, its mandates are determined and its resources furnished by its Member States. Yet the United Nations has successfully established international law and set international standards and programmes in almost every field of human conduct.

However, sovereign power remains with individual nation States. Within nation States, decisions hitherto made by the Executive increasingly need the endorsement of the elected representatives of the people. The views of the people can no longer be ignored. The member national parliaments of the IPU, therefore, decide for their respective nations whether to assume binding international obligations and how to implement at the national level the decisions which States have taken at the international level. In my delegation's view, the task of exercising sovereign power should only be exercised by parliamentarians, that is, men and women elected by the people of each nation, those who are in direct contact with the general population, who are in touch with their shared aspirations and understand their common interests and needs.

One area where the active participation of parliamentarians is needed is in the debate on the financial situation of the United Nations. In preparing the United Nations for the challenges of the twenty-first century and in support of the Secretary-General's reform package, the financial problems of the United Nations need to be addressed with great urgency. It has been

repeated time and again that the key reason for this is the failure of some Member States to pay their dues in full and on time. One reason that has been offered for the inability of Member States to fulfil their financial obligations to the United Nations is that domestic political bodies do not support their current share of the United Nations budget. We believe that through greater contact and collaboration between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union parliamentarians will be in a better position to explain to the public the issues involved so as to garner popular support for international action. This would address the problem of justifying the resources needed for international cooperation through the United Nations.

The IPU's increased participation and collaboration with the United Nations would make the United Nations more representative, as the parliaments represent the will of the people of every nation. We believe that it is only through a productive collaborative relationship between the United Nations and the IPU that the will of the people can be better expressed at the international level through the United Nations — and, conversely, through the IPU, the voice of the intergovernmental process can be disseminated to the grass-roots level. This is a win-win situation that we fully support and encourage.

In closing, my delegation is pleased to announce its decision to sponsor draft resolution A/52/L.9 and commend to the Assembly that the draft be unanimously adopted.

Mr. Ghafoor (Pakistan): The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations share a common interest in collective efforts for the realization of the lofty ideals of the United Nations Charter.

Today, the United Nations stands at the crossroads of its history. During the first half century of its existence, the Organization saw many ups and downs. It now confronts major challenges as it prepares itself for the twenty-first century.

The United Nations is entitled to take pride in making invaluable contributions in a number of crucial areas, such as peacekeeping, economic development, humanitarian assistance and the establishment of legal norms. However, it is disheartening to see that this world Organization has not been able to live up to the expectations of the people of the world.

Despite its shortcomings, the United Nations remains the beacon of hopes and aspirations for people all over the world. The people continue to look up to the United Nations in their quest not only to rid the world of the scourge of war, but also to create the economic, social and human conditions under which all human beings can aspire to better standards of life in greater freedom.

As a representative body of the people of the world, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has an important role to play in the realization of a world free of the scourge of war, hunger, poverty and disease. To achieve this goal, the IPU and the United Nations should actively and fully utilize the framework for cooperation between the two organizations.

Parliamentarians can sensitize the United Nations about the expectations of the people they represent. For some, the United Nations has not achieved the goal of peace and security and stability. In certain regions of the world, it has not been successful in ameliorating the people's sufferings. Lack of action in Bosnia reinforced doubts about the ability of the Organization in dealing with conflicts.

In our own region, the Kashmir dispute is still simmering. The people of Kashmir are still waiting for the United Nations to take measures to implement Security Council resolutions.

At this juncture, when the United Nations is preparing to meet the challenges of the future, cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations can help in realizing the hopes and aspirations of the people of the world. Close cooperation between the two organizations will greatly help in harnessing the power of the people for the realization of the objectives of the United Nations. It is, therefore, necessary that parliamentarians from all countries launch campaigns to create awareness among their constituencies about the role of the United Nations in today's world.

A major change over the past 50 years lies in the growth of civil society. The citizens of the world are increasingly interacting with one another on matters of international significance. To respond to the wishes of the people, the United Nations needs to become more accessible to these new actors, such as non-governmental organizations, who represent civil society. Pakistan for its part will continue to make contributions towards enhancing and expanding the interaction between the United Nations and civil society.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is uniquely placed to build bridges between the United Nations and civil

society. The IPU can mobilize public opinion in favour of the United Nations. It can also contribute to the United Nations role in the promotion of democracy, socio-economic development, peacekeeping and peace-building. In the field of peacekeeping and peace-building, the parliamentarians of major troop-contributing countries might consider the establishment of an IPU forum on United Nations peacekeeping operations that can mobilize international public opinion in support of United Nations peacekeeping endeavours.

As the United Nations prepares for the twenty-first century, a major challenge facing the Organization is to take full advantage of the revolution in informatics. The Secretary-General is to be commended for giving due priority to this task, which deserves the full support of the parliamentarians and the entire international community. The informatics revolution is indeed the revolution of our times and the greatest hope as a force multiplier at the service of development. In this regard, Pakistan takes pride in having been of assistance in moving the United Nations and its Member States further along the path of informatics and cyberspace.

In recent years, the United Nations has come under critical examination. Every organization needs constant review and self-examination and reform. The United Nations needs this perhaps more than any other organization, because it crystallizes within itself the hopes and aspirations of humanity. One must, however, keep in mind that reform of the United Nations cannot be hasty or ill-considered, nor can it be based on anything other than the broadest consensus.

The people of the world have a vested interest in the realization of the lofty ideals of the Charter of the United Nations. Together they can succeed. Let history not say that the people of the world who created this Organization did not measure up to the task of preparing it for the challenges of the future.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): I am honoured to address the General Assembly on the important item of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The basis for this cooperation is the agreement between the two organizations signed last year. That agreement provides a very useful platform for the involvement of parliaments in the work of the United Nations. I am pleased, in this connection, to be able to refer to the active role played by the Norwegian Parliament and the parliaments in the other Nordic countries in facilitating and promoting an active role for parliaments and for IPU through the cooperation agreement.

My Government has noted with great interest and satisfaction the emphasis in the reform proposals of the Secretary-General on the need to involve civil society, in its broadest sense, more actively in the work of the United Nations and we look forward to an exchange of views on how this can be achieved.

The impact of the work of the United Nations can clearly be enhanced by parliaments' playing an active role in advancing issues of international concern. The cooperation agreement reflects a promising development: the growing importance of parliaments in shaping the global agenda, *inter alia*, on such urgent issues as human rights, democratization, good governance and electoral assistance, to mention but a few. In this connection, as a very concrete example, I would like to highlight one area where parliamentarians have played a decisive role: the efforts to achieve a ban on anti-personnel landmines. It is in no small measure thanks to their efforts — the efforts of parliaments — that a number of countries, including my own, have been able to spearhead a process that will culminate in the signing, in Ottawa in December, of a convention to ban anti-personnel landmines.

The role of parliaments in all these areas is clear. They can pass legislation and allocate resources in support of such legislation. The United Nations provides vast opportunities for the sharing of experience and expertise and contributes to strengthening the role of parliaments in the collective efforts of the United Nations.

My Government hopes that the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union will be strengthened in the future and that the work of both organizations will be geared towards maximizing the potential benefit to both organizations of this cooperation.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra): As one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.9, it is my pleasure today to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his personal interest in the issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Indeed, as a country whose Parliament, the *Consell de la Terra*, now the *Consell General*, goes back to the year 1419 — and is thus one of the oldest parliaments in

the world — Andorra is particularly keen on fostering the collaboration between national parliaments and the Organization.

The process of reform of the United Nations is geared towards taking our Organization closer to the people. In order for the representatives of the people to be informed regularly of what happens at the United Nations, so that they can help and support the actions of the Organization, we need more contact of all sorts between our respective parliaments and the Organization. Of course, national Governments must do their share, but initiatives that can enhance dialogue between parliaments and the United Nations are not only necessary but essential.

Andorra applauds, as it did last year, the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, concluded on 24 July 1996. My country, which counts four parliamentarians as advisors in its delegation to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, will live, I can assure the Assembly, by the letter and the spirit of that agreement, in the firm conviction that only a deeper understanding by parliaments of the goals and inner workings of the United Nations will favour a true reform of the Organization and our ability, in the end, to reach the peoples we represent — the peoples mentioned at the opening of the Charter of the United Nations.

Allow me also to commend General Assembly President Hennadiy Udovenko on his personal presence here earlier today, which marks his commitment to the aims of draft resolution A/52/L.9. Allow me, since this is the first time at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly that I am taking the floor here, to congratulate him and you, Sir, on the assumption of your functions and to assure you of the Andorran support for your task during the period 1997-1998.

I wish also congratulate Mr. Miguel Ángel Martínez, recently elected President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, for his new responsibilities. His illustrious record while at the Council of Europe vouches for a very successful mandate. I would also like to put in a good word for Mr. Pierre Cornillon, Secretary-General of IPU, who has always had it in heart to bring the Inter-Parliamentary Union closer to the United Nations. I believe that Mr. Cornillon is a witness to the commitment of the Andorran Parliament to IPU since its acceptance into the organization.

At the United Nations, human rights and development are central. Who is better qualified to promote, bring about and implement these goals than national parliaments, as legitimate and democratic emanations of the peoples' will and as final arbiters of budget allocations that will have clear repercussions for options of economic development? We can only gain by a closer cooperation on these issues between parliaments and Governments, between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Let us approve by consensus draft resolution A/52/L.9.

Mr. Cherginets (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Republic of Belarus, a founding Member of the United Nations and a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), is a sponsor of the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and IPU.

In the implementation of this draft resolution, we feel that a central element is the great opportunity it offers to coordinate the efforts of the United Nations and the parliaments of the countries of the world to resolve the global problems confronting the international community. We hope that this cooperation will facilitate the search for solutions to problems facing our countries, in particular in eliminating the consequences of the unprecedented disaster of the Chernobyl nuclear power-plant accident, which was equivalent to the detonation of 50 atomic bombs. The Republic of Belarus is now obliged to spend a third of its yearly budget to eliminate the consequences of this terrible disaster every year. We understand that our efforts in eliminating the possible consequences will also determine the security of peoples in neighbouring States. This is why both our Parliament and our President are sparing no efforts in this area.

As is well known, one of the features of international organizations is that the effectiveness of their actions depends to a significant extent upon how adequately they reflect the realities of our modern world. In our relationship with other States we accord international organizations and institutions a special role, as we believe in the full participation of Belarus in multilateral cooperation, whether interaction between inter-parliamentary and political structures, economic institutions or mechanisms for social stabilization. An important external precondition to this is the successful development of democratic processes and market reforms in our country.

The Republic of Belarus is prepared to give all kinds of assistance for the creation of favourable conditions for fruitful cooperation between such eminent international organizations as the United Nations and the

Inter-Parliamentary Union. To this end we are prepared to consider the possibility at the appropriate time of hosting one of the joint events under the aegis of the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in our country to discuss the problems that confront the countries of our region, including the prevention of ecological catastrophes, the fight against organized crime, smuggling, drug trafficking, the prevention of regional conflicts, and the resolution of other questions.

I am sure you will agree that the holding of a summit of this kind would be a real contribution to the organization of the United Nations-IPU joint cooperation programme. The organization of the programme would thus also result in interaction among specific States.

We call upon the General Assembly to adopt the draft resolution before it (A/52/L.9) by consensus.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.9. Before we proceed, however, I should like to announce that the following States have joined the co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Benin, Guinea, Guyana, Israel, Mali, the Marshall Islands and Nepal.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L..9?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 52/7).

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 29?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

United Nations A/52/PV.38

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-second Session

38th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 29 October 1997, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko ..... (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 8 *(continued)*

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Request for the inclusion of an additional item

Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/234)

The President: In his note circulated in document A/52/234, the Secretary-General has the honour to request, pursuant to rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-second session of an item entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola".

Owing to the nature of the item, the Secretary-General further requests that the item be allocated to the Fifth Committee.

Unless there is any objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees, in view of the importance and urgency of the matter, that the provision of rule 40 of the rules of procedure, which would require a meeting of the General Committee on the question of the inclusion of this item on the agenda, can be waived?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General, wishes to include an item in the agenda of the current session entitled "Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola"?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to allocate this item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken.

Agenda item 11

Report of the Security Council (A/52/2)

The President: We shall now be discussing the substance of the fifty-second annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, covering the period from 16 June 1996 to 15 June 1997 (A/52/2).

It is widely recognized that, by discharging its duties under its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Council is playing a special role in implementing the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

97-86341 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Currently, at this important stage of the reform of the United Nations, the activities of the Security Council are acquiring additional weight and significance. Therefore, I believe that the spirit of transformation should be guiding our considerations.

In this regard a new concept which has found its reflection in the preparation of the present report should be welcomed. Its realization has produced a better picture of the substantive work of the Security Council and introduced an analytical approach to its assessment. The measures at this juncture constitute an important step forward aimed at enhancing the transparency of the Security Council's work.

I would like to encourage delegates to undertake a constructive and action-oriented discussion which would provide additional opportunities for fostering its interaction with the General Assembly.

I now call on the President of the Security Council, Mr. Juan Somavía, to introduce the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me, Sir, to convey to you personally my pleasure in submitting this report (A/52/2) under your presidency and direction.

It is a great honour for me to continue today the practice established in 1993 by Ambassador Sardenberg of Brazil, and continued by Ambassadors Hannay of the United Kingdom, Al Khussaiby of Oman and Wisnumurti of Indonesia, each of whom addressed you as President of the Security Council to introduce its annual report to the General Assembly.

On each of those occasions, my predecessors indicated the importance the Security Council attaches to the timely submission of its annual report in accordance with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, and gave an account of the progress made during the periods covered in relation to the transparency of the work of the Council. Consideration of the Council's report by the General Assembly constitutes an exceptional occasion for the necessary dialogue and interaction between these two principal organs of the United Nations. It is thus an important element enabling both organs to exercise in a complementary manner their respective functions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

I would like to express appreciation to the Security Council secretariat for its efforts over the past year in ensuring the availability of the report of the Security Council to all delegations well before the beginning of the general debate. I hope that this practice will continue in the future.

This year's report, which bears the symbol A/52/2 and which covers the period from 16 June 1996 to 15 June 1997, once again reflects the heavy workload of the Council in response to problems relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. As the report indicates, during the period under consideration the Council held 115 formal meetings, adopted 52 resolutions and issued 54 statements by the President. In addition, Council members held consultations of the whole totalling some 342 hours, considered over 105 reports of the Secretary-General and reviewed and processed more than 1,214 documents and communications from States and regional and other intergovernmental organizations.

However, the purpose of my presence here today cannot be merely to transmit data and statistics on the past year's work. The report of the Security Council reflects the efforts which all the members of the Council have made to ensure that the report meets the requirements and aspirations expressed by States Members of the Organization with regard to the working methods of the Council. It is important for all Members of the Organization to build a relationship that will enable each principal organ to discharge properly the mandate assigned to it by the Charter.

During the period under review, the Council's informal working group on documentation and other procedural questions worked hard to find ways of satisfying the wish of Member States to receive in a timely manner a substantive, analytical and material account of the Council's work.

The main outcome of its work, as reviewed and approved by the Council, is embodied in the note by the President of the Security Council circulated as an official document under the symbol S/1997/451 of 12 June 1997. In that note, the President sets out the new measures approved by the Council aimed at making its annual report more analytical in nature, as requested, from 16 June 1997 onwards.

Thus, future reports will include the following as background to each subject dealt with by the Council: a descriptive list of the decisions, resolutions and presidential statements of the Council for the preceding

twelve-month period; a description in chronological order of the consideration by the Council of the matter in question and of actions taken by the Council on that item, including descriptions of the decisions, resolutions and presidential statements; a list of communications received by the Council and reports of the Secretary-General; factual data, including dates of formal meetings and informal consultations at which a given subject was discussed; information regarding the work of the subsidiary organs of the Council, including the sanctions committees; information regarding the documentation and working methods and procedures of the Council; matters brought to the attention of the Council but not discussed by it during the period covered; appendices as in the past, but also the full texts of all resolutions, decisions and presidential statements adopted or voted upon by the Council during the reporting period; and information about meetings with troop-contributing countries. Those are the new elements that will appear in next year's report of the Security Council.

There will also be attached, as an addendum to the report, brief monthly assessments of the work of the Council, which representatives who have completed their functions as President of the Security Council may wish to prepare. Allow me to dwell on this last point. I think it important to stress that the members of the Council discussed at length the best way of giving a more substantive and analytical character to the annual report, which many have, quite rightly, considered as a mere description and compilation of information.

This initial approach adopted by the Council — that of monthly assessments that Presidents may provide at the end of their terms — is an important step in the direction the General Assembly has requested. It is a realistic solution, in that it enables the Council to provide information to the General Assembly through brief assessments prepared by each of the Presidents of the Council, under her or his own responsibility, for the month during which she or he presided. These evaluations will be prepared on a personal basis by each former President, who will consult with the other members of the Council for the purpose of reconciling the approaches that may legitimately exist to the various topics that were the focus of attention in each month.

I think this is an important step towards a more analytical report, and while the outcome of this exercise must not necessarily be considered as representing the views of the Security Council, it will have the virtue of combining the individual sensibilities of each President — which will broaden the view on the work that has been carried out — with consultation with members in order to reflect generally shared perspectives. This is a realistic and at the same time innovative solution which has been applied from July of this year. I believe that with time it may become a rich source of information on the substantive work of the Council.

As indicated in the introduction to the report of the Security Council, the report is not intended as a substitute for the official records of the Security Council, which provide a more substantive account of its deliberations. Thus, the report should be read, for the purposes of this discussion in the General Assembly, in conjunction with other official documents of the Council, to which it constitutes a reference guide.

I would also note that various efforts have been made to make the work of the Council more transparent. This is an area to which great attention will continue to be paid. A number of mechanisms have already been established to improve access by Member States to the work of the Council; our experience shows that, in some cases, effectiveness depends not only on the Council itself but also on participation by non-members of the Council.

Consultations between troop-contributing countries and Council members are a case in point. In general, there is too little active participation by all. I believe that such consultations should generate more interaction between those countries and the Council members. Better use needs to be made of them by all concerned. There can be no doubt that those consultations serve an essential formal purpose, which is that of hearing the views of the countries that place their nationals in situations of danger under the United Nations flag — and this is an extremely important objective — but above all, they are important forums for non-members to contribute their views to the decision-making process of the Council. Therefore, they should be encouraged to use this mechanism more actively than is currently the case, and the Council will continue to explore possible ways and means of enhancing this practice.

I think it is also useful to refer to the presidential briefing sessions on the Council's work, open to the 185 Member States of the United Nations and normally held on the same day as informal consultations of the Council have been held. Nevertheless, few delegations participate or ask questions about the work done. I think that this is another area in which, by working together, we will be

able to make those meetings more useful and broaden their scope.

In conclusion, I wish to draw attention to other changes in the way the Council discharges its responsibilities. For example, when in response to threats to international peace and security, a decision has been taken to impose sanctions, the Council has sought, to the extent possible and in keeping with the goal of ensuring effective implementation, to target those responsible for the actions that brought about the imposition of the sanctions. The Council has also responded to humanitarian concerns by making the fullest possible use of exceptions for humanitarian reasons and has conducted regular monitoring on the basis of Secretariat reports.

In addition, the Council has increasingly and systematically sought to highlight its concern over the situation of humanitarian workers in conflict situations and the responsibility of the international community to protect their lives, property and activities. In cooperation with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, we have made progress towards finding appropriate formulas for ascertaining their views on the basis of their experience in the field.

Finally, there is no doubt that much still remains to be done in all aspects of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. It is the responsibility of all of us together — as Members of the United Nations, not as members of one body or the other — to continue the search for working methods that will enable the international community to feel well-served by the interaction of both institutions in the field of peace and security.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): My country being a member of the Security Council, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement of Ambassador Somavía, who has just introduced the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly on behalf of the Council membership.

As we all know, since 1993, when this practice of presenting the Council report to the general membership began, one of the central themes guiding the debate under the current agenda item has been how to promote transparency in the working methods of the Security Council. In our view, there are two main reasons why this question has drawn attention, particularly from non-members of the Council.

First of all, as the Council has played an increasingly important role as an organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security, especially since the end of the cold war, there has been a growing demand outside the Council for information on the Council's actions. Naturally, non-members of the Council have wanted to know in time and in detail what has transpired during informal consultations, which constitute the core of the decision-making process in today's Security Council.

Secondly, non-members of the Council have rightly perceived a deeper and wider transparency of this world body, in particular the Security Council, as an indication that genuine democratization of the Organization is under way. Democratization in the structural dimension is important. In our view, however, democratization of the United Nations cannot be complete without operational democratization, which embraces, among other things, a reasonably fair and equal distribution and the sharing of information among Member States.

Having said that, we believe that over the past year there has been some meaningful progress in the efforts to promote transparency of the Security Council. The new guidelines for the format of the report, contained in the note by the President of the Security Council (S/1997/451), dated 12 June 1997, is a hallmark in this regard.

Drawing upon the principles established by that note, the forthcoming Council report covering the one-year period from 16 June 1997 will be much more user-friendly than the one now before us. The highlight of the future report, however, lies in optional monthly assessments of the work of the Council, to be prepared by the outgoing Presidents under their own responsibility, in consultation with other members of the Council. As rightly pointed out by Ambassador Somavía in his statement, the attachment of this addendum will make the report itself a more substantive and analytical source of information, and thus will contribute to enhancing the Council's transparency.

Some in this Hall may wonder what the report's format has to do with transparency. While the presidency's daily briefing based on informal consultations aims more or less at the real-time transparency of the Council's deliberations, we believe that monthly assessments of the report will contribute to promoting historical transparency. In other words, when a question emerges with regard to past activities of the

Council, those Members outside the Council will be able to refer to the report, rather than spending time contacting a small number of delegations which are able to keep their own record of informal consultations inside the Council.

Over the past year, and especially during our presidency in the month of May, my delegation tried to do its utmost to improve the format of the report to that effect. It was also in this spirit that we provided the general membership with an assessment of the Council's work for the month of May, on our own initiative, even though the new guidelines came into effect on 16 June.

In this vein, my delegation wishes to emphasize that this transparency-enhancing measure was made possible not only by the efforts within the Council, but also by the attention paid by those outside the Council. In particular, the General Assembly's encouragement, contained in its resolution 51/193, has provided the Council with a guidepost pointing to the desirable purpose and content of future reports. Although we do not intend to engage in a legalistic polemic on the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, the six-month process, which was triggered by the General Assembly resolution and eventually led to the adoption of the new guidelines for the Council report, can be regarded, in the view of my delegation, as an example of healthy and positive interaction between the two major pillars of the world body.

While hoping that the ties of closer cooperation and consultation can be further strengthened between these two organs through the continuation of such interactions, we wish to take this opportunity to look at the issue of information-sharing in a broader context, on the basis of our own experience as a Council member. In essence, we believe that the flow of information between the General Assembly and the Security Council should be timely, extensive and two-way, so that both organs can function in a more efficient manner with better knowledge about each other's priorities and preferences.

In our view, there now exist two major channels through which the general membership can receive information from the Council. One channel is the daily briefing by the presidency, based upon informal consultations, and the other is the annual report of the Council. As for the report, even though its new format needs further improvement in order to fully meet the expectations of non-members of the Council, we believe that the progress made over the past year deserves a warm welcome.

On the other hand, it does not seem that the briefing given by the presidency has been playing a substantively meaningful role in terms of information-sharing with the general membership, in particular, when one considers the fact that it is usually not well attended and there are relatively few questions. The format of this briefing may not appeal to most delegations, mainly because it usually takes place hours after informal consultations have ended, or because it is often pre-empted by certain members of the Council who brief the media immediately following informal consultations.

Indeed, whenever I come out of the consultation room and pass by our colleagues, the so-called loungers, waiting to get debriefed by members of the Council, I always feel that, given the critical importance of informal consultations, there should be a more systematic and reliable way of providing information to non-members of the Council on a real-time basis. Although my delegation will leave the Council at the end of this year, we will continue to try to find solutions to this kind of problem, in consultation with other interested delegations.

Regarding the flow of information from the general membership to the Security Council, we wish to emphasize that, without adequate knowledge about the expectations and capabilities of those outside the Council Chamber, the Security Council is unable to deal effectively with a wide spectrum of issues related to the maintenance of peace and security in the post-cold-war era. Especially because various inter-State and intra-State conflicts of this decade are characterized by diverse sources of instability, usually comprising local or regional elements, it seems essential for the Council to familiarize itself with, for instance, the views of neighbouring countries in the area when an issue is brought to its attention. Without this input from the general membership, Council actions might not carry enough weight to lay the necessary foundation for regional peace and security.

Fortunately, in recent years there have been some positive developments in this regard. Expanded use of orientation debates or open debates on certain regional or thematic issues has made a substantial contribution to fostering the Council's awareness of the various characteristics of and challenges posed by the present international security structure. It was with this in mind that my delegation organized an open debate on the subject of protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations, on 21 May, during its presidency of the Council, which eventually

resulted in the adoption of a presidential statement on the matter in June under the Russian presidency. Furthermore, there is another concomitant advantage of such a forum, which results from the open nature of the meeting. As this type of Council debate is open to all of the non-members of the Council, real-time transparency is guaranteed, without any hindrance.

Another important mechanism available, at least to part of the general membership, is the arrangement for the consultation and exchange of information with troop-contributing countries, as contained in the presidential statement of 28 March 1996. Although these meetings of troop-contributing countries and Council members have taken place regularly over the past year, we believe that a more dynamic exchange of views, as well as the more active participation of troop-contributors, would make it possible for the Council to be fully informed about the individual sensitivities and preferences of those that join peacekeeping operations before it takes any action on the mandate of peacekeeping operations.

Lastly, let me briefly touch upon the Arria-formula meeting, which is a unique and extremely informal channel of information for the Council. In a nutshell, this is essentially a closed-door meeting of Council members with an invited personality, which is held primarily for the purpose of information-sharing. This month, Council members had another Arria-formula meeting — with Mr. Diego Arria, who, as Ambassador of Venezuela, created this format of meeting in 1993 — in order to learn about its origin and to discuss its effective and desirable use. My impression is that while the informal nature of the Arria-formula meeting is certainly an asset which facilitates a candid exchange of views, it may also be possible to hold the meeting in a more flexible or more open setting under certain circumstances, with a view to enhancing the transparency of the Council. In this context, we wish to draw the attention of the Assembly to rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, which stipulates that the Council may invite members of the Secretariat or other persons to supply it with information, and to Article 32 of the Charter, which entitles non-members of the Council to participate in the discussion of a dispute under consideration by the Council.

However, my delegation has no intention of claiming at this time that all future Arria-formula meetings should be held in the form of formal meetings of the Council in accordance with the aforementioned rules. Rather, we expect that the Council's working group on documentation and other procedural matters, which has recently taken up this issue, will be able to forge a balanced formula to allow both informality and transparency.

All those mechanisms between the General Assembly and the Security Council, which I have just delineated, amply demonstrate how difficult and sensitive it is to pursue transparency and efficiency at the same time. In principle, however, we firmly believe that an enhanced partnership between the two organs should encompass both elements, so that the calibre of this world body as a whole can be augmented in coping with the broad range of new conflicts and instabilities which have emerged in the post-cold-war era.

Indeed, contradictory as the two concepts may seem, transparency and efficiency do complement each other. In this age of information, it goes without saying that the efficiency of any organization depends, to a large extent, upon how adequately information is shared internally. The degree of information- sharing, in turn, relies heavily upon the extent of transparency within the organization. In this regard, we are convinced that efficiency and transparency can, and should, be pursued in tandem within the United Nations as well.

From this perspective, it is essential, in our view, to secure a more orderly and reliable flow of information in both directions between the two major organs of this world body. While keeping this objective in mind, my delegation has made strenuous efforts to further strengthen and institutionalize the links between the General Assembly and the Security Council throughout the past two years as a Council member, and will continue to do so, starting next year, outside the Council as well.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): I welcome this opportunity to consider the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. The Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Somavía, this month's President of the Security Council, has already spoken on behalf of members of the Council in introducing the report. This debate provides a useful occasion to consider the manner in which the Council carries out its Charter responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security and the way in which it keeps the wider membership informed of its activities.

During the period covered by the report — June 1996 to June 1997 — the Council continued to be faced with a challenging, often heavy agenda. There was some good news: slow, but steady progress in the

implementation of the Dayton peace settlement in Bosnia, and signs of hope that the indicted war criminals in that country would be brought to justice; and renewed hope of lasting peace in Liberia and Tajikistan — two countries whose plight has occupied the Council's attention for much of this decade. But, elsewhere, the news has been grim. The Middle East peace process is stumbling. War continued to ravage Afghanistan. And Africa, which continues to dominate the work of the Council, saw further tragedies: the brutal *coup d'état* against the democratic Government in Sierra Leone, and the humanitarian suffering in the region of the Great Lakes. Perhaps, in retrospect, the Council was too slow or timid in its reactions to some of these challenges. All too often it lacked clear, timely and well-analysed information on the crises, so many of which were fast-moving and confused intra-State conflicts.

The British delegation attaches great importance to ensuring the greatest possible transparency to the Council's actions. I made a particular point of this during our presidency of the Security Council in August. I hope you will have received the assessment of the work of the Council during that month which I prepared following consultations with my colleagues on the Council, and which I have sent to all permanent representatives. I hope that this new means of enhancing Council transparency will become a regular practice. It is one of a number of welcome innovations to the form and content of the Council's future reports to the Assembly which were agreed in June this year.

All Members of the Organization need to make best use of the series of changes which the Council has introduced to its working methods over the last few years. That process of organic evolutionary change has been most welcome. I was therefore surprised to see, when Council President in August, that so few non-members of the Council attend the daily briefings given by the Council President or participate actively in the consultations between Council members and troop contributors which the Council President chairs. Like Ambassador Somavía before me, I hope we can work together to remedy that situation.

This debate is an important occasion for interaction between two of the principal organs of the Organization. The British delegation will be listening carefully to the views expressed today, both on the substance of the Council's work, and on the manner in which it conducts its business. And you may rest assured that we will continue to strive over the next year to ensure that the Council lives up to its responsibilities under the Charter to take swift and decisive action to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure that the United Nations is equipped with the necessary capacity for preventive action and peace support operations.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): Austria, like other delegations, welcomes the introduction of the report of the Security Council by its current President, the Permanent Representative of Chile, earlier in the meeting. We understand this presentation, like similar presentations by the respective Presidents of the Security Council in earlier years, to be an expression of the readiness of the Council to engage in a dialogue on the discharge of its mandate pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter with the General Assembly. This practice, initiated four years ago by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Sardenberg, adds to the ongoing enhancement of the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, bearing in mind the responsibility of the latter to act on behalf of the whole membership.

The newly experienced efficiency of the Security Council after the end of the cold war had a direct impact on the interest of the general membership in the Council's work. Owing, *inter alia*, to the increase in the number of binding decisions adopted by the Security Council, the General Assembly intensified its call for involvement in the decision-making process of the Council, and for improved interaction with, and transparency of, the proceedings of the Council. My delegation welcomes the important steps taken by the Security Council over the past few years with a view to responding to the General Assembly's request, and we are pleased to note the Council's intention to continue to consider and to review ways to improve the Council's documentation and procedure.

An adequate flow of information towards non-members is a necessary prerequisite to understand and assess how the Council is dealing with political issues and should therefore be facilitated as much as possible. In our view the presidency of the Security Council should play a crucial role in keeping the general membership fully informed on the deliberations of the Council. The presidency's monthly forecast should be complemented by an exhaustive announcement of the items to be dealt with by the Council in the daily *Journal of the United Nations* as well as by daily briefings on the Council's work as announced in the *Journal*. The outgoing presidency should wind up its work by presenting an analytical report on the Council's deliberations conducted

and decisions taken under its leadership. The overall information thus offered by the presidency of the Council should be of a quality suitable to satisfy the average demand for information by delegations.

While the monthly forecast in its current form constitutes, indeed, a useful tool for the daily work of delegations, the briefings offered by the respective presidencies could in our view be improved. Although some presidencies give a rather detailed survey of the Council's deliberations, others limit themselves to the enumeration of agenda items. A continuous high standard of information could help to meet the General Assembly's demand for more transparency and would lead to increased interest of delegations in attending these briefings. But I also agree with remarks made earlier by Ambassador Somavía and Sir John Weston that these briefings should be more interactive. This also applies to the troop contributor meetings.

My delegation is pleased to note that the Security Council members have reviewed the format of the annual report, and that as of next year it will be changed, taking into account views expressed on the existing format. In the past, my delegation, like others, has made suggestions in this regard, including the possibility of monthly reports, which would then be put together to form part of the yearly report of the Security Council. We are pleased to find this concept of monthly reports reflected in this year's report in the section on "Security Council working methods and procedure" (A/52/2, chap. 28 B), and we are looking forward to seeing that implemented.

In order to add to the understanding of the Council's decision-making, the monthly report should mainly consist of a detailed and, as far as possible, frank analysis of the Council's deliberations, including a description of diverging opinions and negotiated compromises. The report should be established under the responsibility of the outgoing presidency, without the requirement of formal approval by the Council members. In order to be useful for delegations, we believe it should be circulated in due course, possibly during the first half of the following presidency.

My delegation would, of course, like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to those delegations that have already prepared such reports upon completion of their respective presidencies.

Regular analytical reports on the work of the Security Council will not only contribute to the transparency of the Council's work but also to the promotion of the interaction between the Council and the General Assembly.

As much as the Security Council needs to be transparent for non-members, it also needs to be open for incoming information. During the period under consideration, the Council continued to make use of informal mechanisms with a view to gathering important information from different sources with special knowledge on a given situation. This formula seems especially useful since it allows the Council to canvass a wide range of views in order to form its decision-making and to help further to clarify different aspects covered by its work. We therefore encourage the Council to continue this ad hoc practice in a pragmatic manner.

Member States with a special interest in a specific item should have increased opportunities to articulate their views at an early stage of the Council's consideration. This kind of participation is especially important for countries which are concerned or affected by a given conflict or which, because of their geographic location, would assume a particular role in the ensuing operations mandated or authorized by the Security Council. Here again, we welcome the progress made over recent years and we hope that this trend will continue. A substantial dialogue is of particular importance in the framework of peacekeeping operations. Here, the current mechanism for interaction between the Council, the Secretariat and the troop contributors could, in our view, be further strengthened. However, I repeat that to my mind this also requires increased efforts on the part of the troop-contributing countries.

The relationship between the Council and the General Assembly is undoubtedly a central issue of the ongoing reform debate, which is essentially motivated by the call for more legitimacy for the Council. We are convinced that a high degree of transparency and close interaction among delegations will contribute to fostering this legitimacy, and should therefore be the guiding principles for the future activities of the Council.

Mr. Eliasson (Sweden): I welcome this opportunity for the General Assembly to review the past year's work of the Security Council and to consider its future direction. I thank my friend and colleague, Juan Somavía, for his thoughtful and incisive introduction of the annual report of the Council. I also want to express how happy I am to speak under the chairmanship of the President, whom we all remember as a very effective Ambassador of Ukraine here for some time and, of

course, at present the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Many of the matters dealt with in the report are complex and serious. The Security Council has had its successes but, let us admit, also its setbacks. And its agenda is constantly growing. The Security Council of today deals with the vast majority of ongoing conflicts in all parts of the world. From Sweden's perspective, it is important to emphasize that the Council's responsibility is global: no region or country can be excluded.

The Security Council always has the right — and I would say the duty — to take the necessary action when international peace and security are threatened. It is legitimate for the Council to be concerned when great numbers of innocent civilians are killed, when gross violations of human rights occur or when democratically elected leaders are overthrown by violent means. Such developments increasingly threaten regional peace and affect international security. If they are not dealt with at an early stage, disastrous conflagration is often the result.

It is a source of great concern, and in my view unacceptable, that Security Council resolutions are so often defied by those to whom they are primarily directed: a small number of States flouting the fundamentals of international law, and ruthless parties to domestic conflicts bent on securing victory on the battlefield.

Based on Sweden's experiences from this year's Council membership, I would like to emphasize some important requirements for a more effective Security Council: first, early warning and early information which could lead to early action; secondly, action, according to need, throughout the spectrum of conflict resolution, from early warning to Chapter VII measures; thirdly, closer cooperation with regional organizations based on clear principles; and, fourthly and lastly, stronger interaction with United Nations Members outside the Council.

I want to emphasize that these four points should be concerns not only for the Security Council but for the whole of the United Nations. The success or failure of Security Council action is in the hands of all of us and, indeed, affects all of us. Effective conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building must, indeed, involve the United Nations system as a whole.

As to my first point, the Security Council must be able to take early action based on early warning and information, preferably already at the preventive stage. Lessons should be learned from current cases such as the former Zaire and the Republic of the Congo. And the preventive mission in Macedonia may soon be pronounced a success, but it has yet to set a precedent. The Security Council must be politically prepared to consider preventive measures at different levels, at short notice, on a case-by-case basis.

The possibilities of conflict prevention could also be considered from a regional or subregional perspective. The situation in large parts of Africa today is worrying, with a growing belt of conflicts stretching from the South Atlantic to the Red Sea. There is here an increasing need for a trustful and constructive relationship between the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, and regional actors.

Conflict prevention is admittedly a difficult subject for the Security Council. Respect for sovereignty is of course a fundamental principle in the work of the United Nations, but affected countries all too often try at any price to avoid what they perceive as outside interference. Regional organizations and important neighbours often take a similar approach. Council members are cautious — often too cautious. As we have seen, missed opportunities come at a high price, mainly to those directly concerned in the end.

Strengthening the United Nations capability in conflict prevention remains a priority for Sweden, as a member of the Security Council. To this should be added the development of a new generation of peacekeeping operations and measures to improve openness and broad consultations in the work of the Council. These, indeed, were three main features of Sweden's policy when elected to the Council, with your support, a year ago.

As to my second point, it is fundamental that the Security Council be able to decide on actions throughout the spectrum of conflict resolution. You can visualize a kind of ladder of preventive measures which we should use, from early warning, prevention, political persuasion, mediation and other Chapter VI instruments, to peacekeeping and, if need be, Chapter VII action.

Here, I would like to commend Ambassador Somavía for his observations on the need for humanitarian exceptions to sanctions regimes. It is important to the credibility of the United Nations on Chapter VII action that vulnerable groups not pay the price for their leaders, who are the real and legitimate objects of sanctions. When conditions merit the

establishment of new peacekeeping operations, all Council members must quickly be ready to take the decisions required according to this ladder of prevention and action.

Multinational forces may in some acute situations be the best option for international action. It is vital that such deployment take place with the endorsement of the United Nations. And we should be aware of the risk of overuse of multinational forces at the expense of United Nations peacekeeping.

Member States which turn to the United Nations when their security is threatened legitimately expect to be heard and helped without delay. The Security Council, I stress again, must show its willingness and ability to respond to such requests from Member States in all parts of the world. The credibility of the United Nations will suffer if multinational forces become a substitute for direct United Nations action due to lack of funds or unrelated considerations.

Thirdly, the role of regional organizations in the work of the Council is growing in importance. This is welcome — but more could be done. In the Balkans, the actions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union and others continue to prove essential for peace and stability. In other parts of the world, regional organizations also play a positive role in conflict prevention and resolution.

Yet the Security Council can never abdicate its primary responsibility for international peace and security. It must defend fundamental principles of international law. When regional peace efforts cannot produce results, or when regional action has become a part of the problem and, sadly, not of the solution, the Security Council must insist on assuming its primary role.

Lastly, stronger interaction with non-Council members must be a priority. The Security Council has gone a long way towards increasing openness and broadening consultations with non-members, particularly troop contributors. Again, much still needs to be done, and of course an active interest on the part of the non-Council member States is essential, as Ambassador Somavía and Ambassador Weston have underlined. The Council should, for example, follow the proposals made for more frequent orientation debates and for including affected non-members in its discussions, as provided for by Article 31 of the Charter.

Openness is essential as such, but in particular as a means towards interaction. Non-Council members should do their part by using the opportunities for substantive discussions, at meetings with troop-contributing countries, for example. And all United Nations Member States have a role to play, we should always remember, in ensuring compliance with Security Council decisions.

The format of Security Council reports has been subject to much criticism. The Council has now decided on some improvements, notably the introduction of monthly presidential assessments. Here, I would like to thank Ambassador Sucharipa for his comments about those reports that have been issued this year.

But Security Council reports — annual or special — can at best be instruments. They should help ensure that the work of the Security Council and the General Assembly is mutually reinforcing. They should remind both bodies of the United Nations that they have different responsibilities, but also share the same constituency and, indeed, the same vocation, namely, to build peace and security for all.

Mr. Ople (Philippines): We thank both the Security Council for the timely submission of its annual report to the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Chile, for his presentation of the report. We also appreciate the efforts of the Council to improve the content of the report and the measures it has taken in this regard, as stated in section B of chapter 28 in part II of the report. We look forward in particular to receiving the addendum mentioned in paragraph 5 of the note contained in section B, consisting of brief assessments on the work of the Security Council by representatives who have served as President of the Security Council.

We believe these efforts to improve the report are a continuation of the positive changes that have occurred in recent years to improve the work and documentation of the Council. These changes have not gone unrecognized, and we encourage the Council to enhance its efforts further in this regard.

Nevertheless, and despite the efforts to improve the report, we are disappointed that, once again, the report fails to measure up substantively to what the General Assembly called for in resolution 51/193, particularly with respect to the improvements suggested in operative paragraph 4 of that resolution. These improvements include the need for the provision of substantial

information on the work and recommendations of the Council's subsidiary bodies such as the sanctions committees, on the informal consultations of the whole undertaken prior to action by the Council on substantive issues, and on requests received under Article 50 of the Charter and actions taken by the Council thereon.

As called for in the same paragraph, a section highlighting the extent to which resolutions of the General Assembly on issues falling within the scope of both organs have been taken into account by the Council would also be a very useful addition to the report. A section of this nature would provide a good basis for assessing and analysing the Council's work, and for considering ways to improve the interaction between the Assembly and the Council.

The Philippine delegation believes the content of the present report, which remains essentially a compilation of official proceedings and decisions, continues to make it difficult for the General Assembly to undertake a truly substantive and in-depth consideration and analysis of the actions of the Council, as well as its subsidiary bodies. We therefore urge and encourage the Council to consider and implement the various recommendations to improve its report contained in resolution 51/193.

An analytical and substantive annual report would also facilitate implementation of the decision in General Assembly resolution 51/241, calling upon the President of the General Assembly, based on his assessment of the debate on the report, to arrange informal consultations to discuss the need and content of any action by the Assembly on matters arising from the debate on the report. A report in line with that envisioned by resolution 51/193 would, in our view, encourage a more substantive debate and thus enhance the President's ability to determine the nature and output of these informal consultations. We further believe that holding such consultations on a regular basis would contribute to a more detailed examination of the report and lead to a more productive and interactive relationship between the two organs, as well as help revitalize the Assembly's role in addressing issues affecting international peace and security.

We therefore urge the President to take this decision into account and, notwithstanding the observations we have made on the contents of the present report, to consider arranging for such consultations at an appropriate time during this session. The President may wish to consider the scope and particular matters which could be discussed in the informal consultations. For this reason, we believe that this agenda item should be kept open throughout the year, as decided by the General Assembly in resolution 51/241.

The submission of special reports by the Security Council to the General Assembly, during the course of each session, in accordance with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter and as encouraged in paragraph 5 of resolution 51/193, would also be a major vehicle for ensuring continuous and up-to-date information on the Security Council's decisions and activities. In this regard, my delegation suggests that special reports be issued on major Council actions and/or situations affecting international peace and security that occur in the period between the submission of the annual reports. These actions would include the establishment or termination of peacekeeping or other operations or substantive changes in their mandates. Decisions by the Council to impose or lift sanctions on any Member State of the United Nations or to change existing sanctions regimes should also be occasions for issuing a special report.

The need for a more substantive Security Council report is an essential element of the broader efforts to reform the Council's working methods in order to achieve greater transparency in its work and secure more effective participation of non-members in its decision-making process. The Philippines, along with the other members of the Non-Aligned Movement, has over the past few years been actively supporting specific reforms towards this end, particularly in the discussions of the Open-Ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council. We shall continue to do so.

In addition to a more substantive report to the General Assembly, these desired reforms include more effective consultations with troop-contributing countries, measures to allow participation of non-members in the Council's informal consultations of the whole, through the application of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter; the holding of open public meetings in lieu of informal consultations of the whole; more frequent consultations and meetings between the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council; and clearer procedures for requesting meetings of the Council in accordance with Article 35 of the Charter. It is also necessary to curtail and rationalize the use of the veto. In this regard, we support the position of the Non-Aligned Movement that the veto power should apply only to actions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter.

We believe that if such measures could be adopted, in addition to those related to improving the report, the

United Nations would truly be strengthened and the principles of democracy and sovereign equality of States fully observed.

Mr. Hasmy Agam (Malaysia): I would like to express my deep appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Somavía of Chile, for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. My delegation is particularly grateful to him for his oral presentation, which was an important introduction and supplement to the report.

The debate on the report of the Security Council will provide an opportunity for the other 170 Members of the Organization that are not members of the Council to be fully informed and to discuss the work of the Council over the past year. The debate is meant to be not a ritual and a mere formality, but an opportunity for the Security Council, as the primary organ of the United Nations tasked with the maintenance of international peace and security, to apprise the Member States of the United Nations of its decisions and actions. The debate also provides an opportunity for Member States to make certain pronouncements on the actions of the Council as they pertain to international peace and security.

My delegation, along with other Member States, made a number of pertinent observations and suggestions last year on both the format and the substance of the Council's reports. Unfortunately, the report continues to remain largely a compendium of presidential statements and Council resolutions and a compilation of communications and documentation received by the Council during the course of the year. Reading through this compendium, a State that is not a member of the Council would have difficulty in following the work of the Council and particularly in fully comprehending the decisions arrived at by the Council. "As a guide to the activities of the Security Council during the period covered" (A/52/2, introduction, second paragraph), it would have been most helpful to non-members if the report had been more analytical. It would have been particularly useful if the report had contained a brief and objective assessment of the work of the Council during the period under review, covering both success or lack of success in respect of the issues handled by the Council. My delegation notes with interest some innovative approaches that will be incorporated in future reports of the Council, as indicated by the President of the Council in his oral submission this morning. We look forward to reading and scrutinizing these future reports. In the meantime, our comments will be based on the report in its present form.

Given the growing trend of the increased democratization of the United Nations, there is a need for greater transparency in the work of the Security Council, which, unfortunately, remains the least democratic of United Nations institutions. While the practice of closed meetings of the Council cannot be discarded, and may be necessary to enable members of the Council to facilitate decision-making on sensitive issues, the general membership of the Organization also needs — and expects — to be informed of the substance or thrust of those closed consultations. There have been several suggestions made to achieve increased transparency in the work of the Council, such as the publication of summary records of the Council's closed consultations. Such summary records would supplement the annual report of the Council in its present format and redress its many inherent shortcomings. There is also merit to the proposal that a Security Council bulletin, to be published on a monthly basis, should include references to the positions of members of the Council on actions taken by it. There have also been suggestions to publish quarterly reports, which would increase transparency and strengthen the free flow of information between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Any one of these proposals deserves serious consideration. More important, there should be more frequent formal meetings of the Council, which would allow non-members to express their views on the various important issues being addressed by the Council before decisions are taken on them. Formal meetings of the Council would be a clear manifestation of the institutional linkage between the Council and the larger membership of the Organization, which should be further strengthened.

Non-members should also benefit from special briefings given by the Special Representatives and Envoys of the Secretary-General on issues before the Council. Those briefings would update non-members of the Council on the latest developments on issues of importance and concern to the international community.

My delegation welcomes the regular briefings given by the President of the Council to non-members. Unfortunately, very often little information is given during these briefings beyond what is given to the representatives of the press corps, and this really explains the general lack of interest shown by Member States in the briefings. While there is every reason for the President or his representative to be prudent in the briefings, he or she should be encouraged to be a little more forthcoming in responding to questions posed by Member States than he or she would be to questions

posed by the press corps. At the same time, it would be helpful to Member States if these briefings were given immediately following the consultations of the Council rather than some two or three hours later and usually after the briefing of the press, as is currently the practice. My delegation, however, welcomes the monthly assessment by the President of the Council, which has been helpful in giving an insight into the Council's work during that particular month. We hope that this practice will continue and be formalized.

While the Secretariat and other organs of the United Nations are undergoing reforms with a view to enhancing the Organization's effectiveness and efficiency, so too must the Security Council. The discussions that have taken place in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council have generated many concrete ideas and proposals pertaining to both the decision-making process, or methodologies, of the Council and its structure. All of these would contribute to making the Council more effective and efficient. They would also make it more transparent, representational and democratic, in spite of its inherent limitations. My delegation therefore looks forward to the early conclusion of these deliberations so as to enable the reform of the Council to move ahead without undue delay. The reform measures, once agreed and implemented, would also serve to further enhance the Council's standing and legitimacy in the eyes of the international community.

My delegation is particularly concerned about one important aspect of the work of the Council: the imposition of sanctions on Member States. We regret that sanctions have of late been used, or have been perceived to be used, as a tool in the furtherance of narrow national interests of some of the Council's members, to serve specific political objectives or agendas. Such use or perception of use of sanctions does not contribute to enhancing the image or prestige of the Council. Sanctions, which are imposed on behalf of Member States, have often brought untold misery and hardship to an unintended target — the helpless populace, particularly children, nursing mothers and the infirm and aged. Here my delegation welcomes the important comments made by the President of the Council in respect to the humanitarian aspects of sanctions. My delegation has always believed that sanctions should be an instrument of last resort and should be applied only after other measures have failed. At the same time, when they are applied sanctions should have clear and specific objectives and parameters and be subject to regular reviews and evaluations by the Council. In this regard, my delegation had in the past called for a separate chapter in the report to comprehensively reflect the activities and decisions of the sanctions committee, a matter which, regrettably, continues to be treated in a superficial fashion.

The establishment of an institutionalized system of consultations between Security Council members and troop-contributing countries has contributed to increased coordination in peacekeeping operations. This practice should be continued and further institutionalized. On a related matter, Malaysia, as a troop contributor, is increasingly concerned that the continuing financial crisis faced by the Organization has resulted in the subsidizing of a sizeable portion of the costs of peacekeeping operations by the troop-contributing countries, many of which, like Malaysia, are developing countries. In this regard, my delegation would once again urge all Member States to pay their peacekeeping contributions on time, in full and without conditions. The United Nations should not be put in a position of not being able to reimburse troop-contributing countries on time. Such a situation will only discourage the developing countries from coming forward to contribute their troops for peacekeeping operations. On a positive note, Malaysia is gratified that the question of equitable compensation to those men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of the United Nations has now been satisfactorily settled on the basis of just and equitable principles.

Mr. Ayewah (Nigeria): Let me begin by thanking the President of the Security Council, the Representative of Chile, for his introduction of the annual report of the Council covering the period 16 June 1996 to 15 June 1997, contained in document A/52/2.

The presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly is important and serves a number of purposes. First, it helps to enhance and strengthen the cooperative relationship that should exist between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Secondly, it affords the General Assembly the opportunity to further inform itself about the activities of the Security Council and to make inputs and recommendations that, hopefully, will influence the future direction of its work. Thirdly, it underscores the importance of accountability. After all, the Security Council acts on behalf of the entire membership of the United Nations. By reporting to the General Assembly, the Council assures itself of the support of the Assembly

members for the activities and decisions it has taken on their behalf.

Since the establishment by the Security Council, in June 1993, of an informal working group on documentation and other procedural matters, and partly as a result of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, a series of steps has been taken by the Council to provide for greater transparency, and increased interaction and consultation between Council members and non-members. All these have made a salutary contribution to the credibility of the Security Council, but they still fall short of the desired transparency which most United Nations Member States expect from the Council. Closed-door consultations continue to be the Council's preferred approach. Besides, most of the improvements that have been proposed for the working methods of the Council have not yet been institutionalized.

In this regard, we note the emerging consensus in the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform about Cluster-II-related issues. We, however, wish to underscore once again that no reform of the Council will be complete without an expansion on an equitable geographical basis of the Council's membership in both categories. We shall, of course, have more to say on this issue under the proper agenda item.

As for the report itself, we note the improvements that have been agreed upon by Council members aimed at enhancing its analytical nature. I am referring to measures approved by the Council, as listed in its President's note of 12 June 1997, document S/1997/451. These include the attachment, as an addendum to the report, of brief assessments on the work of the Council which representatives who have completed their functions as President of the Security Council prepare on their own responsibility and in consultation with Council members. The circulation of such assessments by some past Presidents is both responsive and instructive.

Nonetheless — and we must continue to draw attention to this — the report basically remains a compilation of the various communications received by the Council and of the decisions adopted by it during the reporting period. We believe the report should provide an analysis of the activities of the Security Council, the decisions that have been taken, and how far those decisions have evolved over time, particularly during the implementation phase.

It would be very useful to know whether a particular decision has helped to move the process forward towards the resolution of the problem and what lessons, if any, could be learned. Although this would involve a lot more work and the use of increased resources, we believe that it is the only way to have a user-friendly report on the Council's activities.

The workload of the Council in the discharge of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security continues to be heavy. It has increased not only in volume, but in scope. Although the statistics for this reporting period in terms of the number of formal meetings, resolutions, presidential statements and hours of consultations show a decline compared to the high volume of two to three years ago, it is still a heavy responsibility and a reflection of the changed international political environment.

Similarly, although there has been a decrease in the number of United Nations peacekeeping operations and troop levels in comparison with the state of play two to three years ago, one must admit that these operations continue to be a major undertaking of the United Nations, accounting for a greater percentage of United Nations resources and expenditure. A majority of the peacekeeping operations currently being undertaken by the United Nations are located in developing countries, particularly in Africa. Efforts to find solutions to some of these conflicts have become the responsibility of regional or subregional organizations acting in concert among themselves and in pursuit of the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

In some cases, the United Nations has continued to play a complementary role. In the West African subregion, for example, the solution of the Liberian conflict benefited from a cooperative relationship between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations, including the co-deployment of personnel on the ground. Although it took a while before the Security Council became actively engaged in the resolution of the Liberian conflict, its involvement and that of other members of the international community at some crucial stages of the process proved very helpful and useful.

Following the overthrow of the democratically elected Government of President Kabbah of Sierra Leone on 25 May 1997, the ECOWAS leaders have again seized the initiative to resolve the situation. At the ECOWAS summit meeting in August 1997, they decided to impose

sanctions and an embargo on the junta. The import of these measures was subsequently endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1132 (1997) of 8 October 1997. With this combination of measures, the ECOWAS Committee of Five has now achieved a major breakthrough in its dialogue with the junta. We hope that the six-month peace plan for the restoration of constitutional order and the reinstatement of the Government of President Kabbah will be faithfully complied with by the junta. And for this to happen, the continuing support of the Security Council, including through the maintenance of the sanctions and the deployment of military observers, will be necessary.

However, there are some crisis situations in Africa which have not received the full attention of the Security Council. A case that readily comes to mind in this regard is the situation in the Republic of the Congo. At the outset of the crisis, many African countries indicated their readiness to make troops available to an inter-African force to help stabilize the situation. Their expectation was that the United Nations or the international community would finance their participation. This never materialized. The crisis in that country has resulted in the displacement of over two thirds of the residents of Brazzaville and the extensive destruction of the city's infrastructure. The crisis has been further complicated by the involvement of external forces. We can only hope that these forces will pursue the logic of peace rather than their economic, political or strategic interests.

In concluding, we would like to underscore the continuing primacy of the responsibility of the United Nations in the promotion of international peace and security. International peace and security are indivisible. This is the essence of collective security. We therefore hope that the Council will, even at this late stage, get itself properly seized of the situation in the Congo with a view to the restoration of normalcy in that part of the world.

Finally, my delegation would like to thank the Secretariat for the efforts that have gone into the preparation of this report. We are aware that a lot of time and resources have gone into its production.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly has before it the report of the Security Council for the period June 1996-June 1997. Continuing the sound practice begun by Brazil, the report was introduced to us today by the Security Council President, Ambassador Juan Somavía of Chile.

Mexico attaches special importance to the obligation of the Security Council under Article 24 of the Charter to submit annual reports on its work to the General Assembly. The Member States, which have conferred upon the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must be apprised of the activities undertaken by that organ on their behalf.

That is why it is a source of particular satisfaction to note that, in recent years, the members of the Security Council have made commendable efforts earnestly to fulfil this duty. We seem to have moved beyond the time when that provision of the Charter was considered to be a mere bureaucratic procedure, devoid of substance.

The document before us today has the same basic structure as last year's report. We welcome the continued desire for openness, which allows relations between the Council and the General Assembly faithfully to reflect the spirit of balance sought by the authors of the Charter. Communication between the two organs must be fluid and constant. It is appropriate to reiterate that the Security Council acts not on its own authority, but on behalf of us all. We are all affected by its decisions. Its activities are of interest to us all.

The report also announces that, as of 1997, the healthy trend of enhancing the analytical nature of the description of the Council's tasks will be strengthened. We appreciate the assessments that have been prepared by the successive Presidents of the Council in recent months. These documents are useful instruments in helping us to understand better what is happening. We welcome this initiative, which could not be included officially in the current report because it was adopted outside the period covered by the document.

We urge future Presidents of the Council to continue this practice. We assure them that we appreciate their efforts to keep us informed, which benefits both the Council and the General Assembly.

The first part of the report details the many items the Council considered as it discharged its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The long list of conflicts and situations of tension shows that, despite the hopes aroused by the end of the cold war, there are lingering and new situations that threaten peace and security everywhere in the world.

We note with concern that the Security Council has often had to intervene in internal situations — situations that were not envisioned by the authors of the Charter. The clear line that should separate international action from national jurisdiction has been blurring. We are witnessing a new scenario whose limits have not yet been defined. Practice has been transcending law.

Mexico insists that it is critical to act cautiously. The Security Council must not use an elastic interpretation of Chapter VII of the Charter to become an organ with limitless powers. The maintenance of peace cannot justify the indiscriminate imposition of exceptional measures not only upon States, as foreseen in the Charter, but also upon entities not contemplated in the Charter, such as individuals and internal factions — which, as we all know, has happened recently. Abuse of Chapter VII weakens the United Nations.

Among the issues before the Security Council, one, for obvious reasons, is of great importance to Mexico: Guatemala. The Council operation in that neighbouring country shows that success is achieved when the principles governing peacekeeping operations are strictly respected. United Nations intervention in Guatemala could well serve as an exemplar for other missions. The Security Council did not try to supplant the will of the parties to the long-standing Guatemalan conflict. It was those parties who, with patience and dedication, resolved their differences at the negotiating table and signed a peace agreement. It was they who requested a United Nations presence to monitor the implementation of what had been agreed. The Security Council acceded to that formal request by the Government of Guatemala and sent the small military mission needed to supervise the ceasefire and the demobilization. The operation had a defined mandate and it carried out its tasks in full and on schedule.

These events prove the importance of acting in accordance with principles. With political will, clarity of purpose and unified resolve, the desired results will be obtained.

We welcome the initiative taken in September — outside the present reporting period — to hold a meeting to consider the persistent problems afflicting the African continent. We hope that its results will help Africa at last to achieve the peace, stability and prosperity its peoples deserve. We believe that the report to be submitted by the Secretary-General, with specific recommendations for preventing and resolving conflicts there, will help lay the groundwork for peace and sustainable economic development as a support for African efforts to build a future of peace, democracy and justice.

The Security Council reports on growing cooperation from regional organizations in the maintenance of peace. Here my delegation stresses that the activities of regional organizations in this sphere must fall within the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter and must strictly respect the functions and areas of competence defined in their respective founding statutes.

The report of the Security Council before us today is quite different from the sterile document to which we had become accustomed, and we reiterate how much this pleases us. The Council has begun to heed the appeals of the General Assembly, among which we highlight resolution 51/193, adopted last year on the initiative of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Mexico voted in favour of that resolution to demonstrate anew its commitment to the openness and transparency that should characterize the work of the Security Council. We welcome this trend, and hope that it will be strengthened with the support of the members of the Council, and especially that of its five permanent members.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): First of all, let me congratulate the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Juan Somavía, for his very clear and comprehensive presentation of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly. My compliments go also to the Secretariat for its excellent preparatory work.

There is little need to stress the importance of the subject of today's discussion. What the United Nations Charter requires is close and effective coordination between the Security Council and the General Assembly, consistent with the respective responsibilities of those two principal organs. The Security Council's report to the General Assembly is therefore an essential tool for ensuring such coordination. Article 15 of the Charter sets out in its first paragraph the legal framework for the Assembly's consideration of the report, focused on the measures decided upon or taken by the Council to maintain international peace and security.

Previous and current debates in the General Assembly and other forums, such as the Working Group on Security Council reform, have underlined the need for a meaningful debate on the Council's report, as well as for greater transparency in the Council's work and greater accessibility to non-members of the Council. My

country, Italy, has constantly been and will continue to be strongly in favour of pursuing these goals.

In particular, we must remain extremely vigilant to increase — and not to reduce or undermine in any way or form — the fundamental role of the General Assembly as the major pillar of the United Nations. We should not allow it; we should not allow a decrease in the leverage of the General Assembly vis-à-vis other organs of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. Reforms should take into account everyone's views and be the result of intense consultations, carried out in a true democratic spirit and with equal involvement of all — I stress "all" — United Nations Member States. The outcome should not be such as to benefit the very few at the expense of the great many — and, I should add, at the expense of the General Assembly.

As Ambassador Somavía pointed out, this year's report shows that the Council has continued its intense activity in the maintenance of international peace and security and related humanitarian aspects. The number of meetings and informal consultations held, and decisions taken, demonstrate the Council's commitment and dedication in responding to the demands of today's international community.

In particular, I would like to highlight the extraordinary speed and efficiency with which the Council acted at the request of Albania and Italy to authorize the multinational peace operation in Albania. The actual decision of the Security Council came in a matter of only 12 hours from the time of our request, setting, I believe, a record in the history of Security Council deliberations on peacekeeping operations. As we are all aware, Operation Alba was a complete success, helping to re-establish law, order and a legitimate Government in Albania.

As a member of the Council during part of the period covered by the report, Italy actively participated in the Council's efforts and work. The guidelines for our action were the principles of reciprocal trust, transparency and accountability, and the idea of promoting and defending the interests of the United Nations, not the interests of a particular country or group of member countries. What we did when we were in the Council — and I am delighted to repeat it here — was to inform others of what we were doing almost by the hour when this involved other parties, other Governments. I really and truly think that that should be the duty of every Council member.

In the area of the Council's working methods and procedure, we note with satisfaction the steps that were taken to improve the format of the report to the General Assembly. These measures will take effect in the preparation of the next report, covering the period 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998. As indicated by the President of the Security Council's note (S/1997/451) of 12 June 1997, they relate to the timely submission of the report, as well as to various information to be included in it, dealing in particular with meetings of the Council and related decisions, matters brought to the attention of the Council and the activity of subsidiary organs. More important, the note provides for the attachment, as an addendum to the report, of brief assessments on the work of the Security Council, prepared under their own responsibility by representatives who have completed their functions as President of the Council. I believe that this is indeed a significant achievement, which goes in the right direction, the direction of promoting increased participation of all, and exclusion of none, and true transparency in the work of the Council. However, Italy believes that all these measures, albeit commendable, are still insufficient to adequately enhance the interaction between the Council and the General Assembly.

In this respect, I would like to emphasize once again the need for the report to provide substantive indications of the process leading to the Council's decisions. In particular, we continue to believe that the report should include a concise account of the Council's informal consultations on crisis areas, regional tensions, humanitarian emergencies and other issues crucial to local and global stability. We look forward to further improvements in the format and contents of the Security Council's report to the General Assembly. For this purpose, a good basis for analysis and discussion is provided by General Assembly resolution 51/193, adopted last December.

The Italian delegation also wonders if the time has not come to give serious consideration to ways and means of implementing Article 44 of the Charter. This Article states that when the Security Council has decided to use force, before calling upon a Member not represented in the Council to provide armed forces, it shall invite that Member to participate in the decisions of the Security Council concerning the employment of contingents of that Member's armed forces. We think that we need to ensure that countries which are asked to risk the lives of their soldiers — of their citizens — in peacekeeping operations are given a voice in the decision-making process of the Council.

Finally, Article 24 of the Charter states that the Members of the Organization:

> "confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf".

The transparency of the work of the Council vis-à-vis all members of the United Nations is no less important than the Council's effectiveness in performing its mandate. We are confident that today's debate will reaffirm both values, in the interest of Member States, regional organizations and the United Nations as a whole.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): This discussion provides us with a further opportunity to follow up the activities of the Security Council, evaluate its work and consider whether the Council took note of our observations, responded to our proposals and implemented our requests. In its introduction, the report states that the Council has introduced improvements into the format of the report, rationalized its documentation and taken measures to make available draft resolutions to Member States that are not members of the Council, and organized briefings. Some may believe that these measures are important, but we see nothing new in them. They have not brought about the transparency on a broad scale called for by Member States. Consequently, the report remains a compilation of the official proceedings of the Council throughout the year, which makes it difficult for Member States to evaluate the work of the Council on these bases.

The decisions and presidential statements are presented without any background information about the consultations surrounding them or the causes leading to their adoption. It is very clear that the Security Council did not take into consideration a request made emphatically and constantly by Member States with regard to increasing the number of plenary meetings and to limiting the scope of informal consultations as strictly as possible. What causes us concern is that the Security Council still acts completely counter to this way. Its report states that it convened 115 plenary meetings, during which 52 resolutions were adopted and 54 presidential statements issued. It also states that the Council met in informal consultations for a total of over 342 hours.

The document we are discussing today contains no information about the substance of those consultations. This means that the Security Council either still persists in ignoring our requests, or considers that what took place in its consultations is a secret that Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Security Council are not supposed to know, although the Council is supposed to act on their behalf. The document before us states that the Council undertook consultations during the period in which three reviews of the sanctions imposed by Security Council resolution 748 (1992) took place. But the report does not reveal to us what took place during those consultations, the most recent of which lasted for over two hours.

We should have liked the Assembly to know that, during consultations, some States expressed their great appreciation for the positive initiatives of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to resolve the conflict that took place as a result of the Lockerbie incident, and that they appreciated and valued Libya's flexibility in addressing the problem. We hoped that the report would mention that some of the members of the Council supported proposals by the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement to put on trial those suspected of having any link to the incident involving Pan Am flight 103. The report should have referred to the fact that only two States rejected the request by other members of the Council, using the Council's mechanism of the so-called consensus to obstruct the proposal that would have brought about a swift resolution of the problem and, accordingly, called for a lifting of the sanctions imposed on the Libyan people and brought to an end the anguish of the families of the victims.

Undoubtedly there are other issues which are of interest to other Members. These issues could have been addressed by the report with more clarity and in greater detail. What we see before us is a simple briefing to the Assembly on the dates of the Council's meetings, and a reproduction of statements and resolutions already adopted. This information is already known to Member States, and may be of use to researchers and students, but it cannot be used by Member States as the basis for a discussion of the work of the Council and an evaluation of that work.

Article 31 of the Charter allows States that are not members of the Security Council to participate in the discussion of any question brought before the Council, whenever such a State considers that its interests are specially affected. This Article has been applied to plenary meetings, but not to the holding of informal

consultations, which have unfortunately become the real framework for decision-making. On the basis of our experience with the Council, we believe that it has become necessary to undertake a reform of this practice. This is because of our belief that those who drafted the Charter did not intend the application of that Article to be confined only to plenary meetings, but to be extended to all meetings of the Security Council. Allowing concerned States to participate in the Council's consultations has great significance which becomes particularly apparent when the other party to the question under consideration is a member of the Security Council. This is the case with us at present. As is well known, my country was thrust into conflict brought about by permanent members of the Security Council. During informal consultations of the Council, they are allowed to express their views, while we are prevented from doing so, in contravention of the letter and spirit of Article 31 of the Charter.

The rights of States that are not members of the Council to clarify their positions during consultations has been stressed by many Member States including, for example, States in the Non-Aligned Movement. Today we reiterate this call and urge the swift implementation of this principle. Allowing a State to participate in a plenary meeting after the Council has already made its decision cannot influence the decisions already taken. Consequently it is only a formalistic practice, designed to rubber-stamp decisions already arrived at in camera and in secrecy which are totally unjustified.

The time has come for a drastic review of the working methods of the Council and to consider ways and means of enhancing serious and veritable cooperation between it and the General Assembly. We must undertake measures that will guarantee clarity in its work, so as to ensure that this organ is not a tool used by certain States to further their own objectives. That is why we must undertake several steps.

First, we must review or substantively amend the annual report of the Council so that it includes a full presentation of the background to decisions adopted and statements made by the Council. Furthermore, the report must include details about the deliberations that took place during consultations, together with more comprehensive reviews with regard to the work of the subsidiary organs of the Council, particularly the sanctions committees.

Secondly, the Council must follow proper work methods in order to enable Member States to participate in deliberations prior to the start of the decision-making process. Such States would then not find themselves presented with faits accomplis, the decisions already taken and their views with no influence on the outcome of the deliberations.

Thirdly, the Council must broaden the basis of its consultations with Member States and implement Article 31 of the Charter with regard to States involved in issues which are before the Council in the context of informal consultations.

Fourthly, the Security Council must enhance its relations with the General Assembly and consult with it on how to treat international issues, especially those relating to the maintenance of peace and security. The Assembly's role should not be confined to the mere approval of financial allocations for peacekeeping operations.

Fifthly, the Security Council must clarify its terms of reference and the way in which it makes decisions and arrives at positions. It must also make reference to Charter provisions, or any other legal principles, used in its decision-making process, with regard to every resolution or measure issuing from the Security Council.

Sixthly, it must find a mechanism that allows the General Assembly to hold the Council accountable, so that democracy can be guaranteed in its decision-making and double standards in its work can be avoided. We must also guarantee that such acts conform to the provisions of the Charter. This is extremely important, because some States have dragged the Council into situations that are totally outside its purview and its mandate under the Charter.

Seventhly, the work methods of the sanctions committees should be reviewed with a view to enabling Member States concerned to attend their meetings and to express their opinions and views on matters under consideration. There must also be a review of the guidelines for the work of these committees so that democratic principles can apply to their decisions and restrictions on applications submitted to these committees can be avoided.

In conclusion, we hope that the Council will give the proposals and observations which we and other several States have made the attention they deserve, and that the Council will, without undue delay, start improving its methods of work and those of its subsidiary bodies. This should be the beginning of a serious reform

process that will guarantee transparency in its actions in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, thereby responding to the requests of Member States, on whose behalf the Security Council acts.

Mr. Gomaa (Egypt): Let me start by thanking Ambassador Juan Somavía, Permanent Representative of Chile and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for his comprehensive presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly this year.

Allow me also to thank the Security Council Secretariat for its efforts in preparing the report in a timely manner that allowed its publication at an early stage of the session, thus responding positively to the need for its timely distribution which has always been a concern for us.

Since the discussion of the report of the Security Council to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly and the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/193 on this agenda item, the Security Council has taken some steps towards improving the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly, both in the descriptive and analytical parts. These steps are reflected in the note by the President of the Security Council which stated some agreed changes to be introduced into the report to be submitted to the General Assembly covering the period from 16 June 1997 to 15 June 1998. These changes, though minimal, give a positive impression about the orientation of the Council towards more transparency and openness.

The most noticeable development in the note is that it opens the door for Presidents of the Security Council to prepare at the end of their presidency an assessment reflecting their evaluation of the work of the Council under their presidency. While we had hoped that these evaluations would be approved by the Security Council itself, we welcome this development as a first step, and hope that all Presidents of the Security Council will present these evaluations in a manner that could provide a complete evaluation of the year covered by the report.

Apart from these positive developments, there has been no progress in other aspects mentioned in General Assembly resolution 51/193.

The annual report before us, like those of previous years, continues to present no more than a compilation of documents already provided to delegations, at the appropriate time, which constitutes a waste of effort, material resources and time.

In our view, a comprehensive report should include the following.

First, it should contain a substantive, analytical and descriptive part reflecting accurately the activities of the Council in the year under review.

Secondly, for reasons of transparency, it should contain a record not only of the formal meetings of the Council, but also of its informal meetings, where most of the actions and decisions of the Council are agreed upon before being formally adopted, and which remain in total obscurity. Records are also needed for the formal and informal meetings of the sanctions committees. The Security Council should periodically conduct an overall evaluation of sanctions regimes and their impact on the populations in question as well as on third States affected by the imposition of sanctions. Also, an assessment of the results obtained by implementation of sanctions would help in the evaluation of the effectiveness of such sanctions. In this regard, the working paper on An Agenda for Peace prepared by the General Assembly and adopted by consensus in resolution 51/242 gains particular importance, as it reflects the general orientation of the General Assembly in this matter.

Thirdly, it should contain a clear definition of the presidential statements and statements to the press and their value from the legal point of view, taking into consideration the lack of any provisions regarding their validity in the provisional rules of procedures of the Security Council.

Besides the annual report, the Security Council should prepare and submit to the General Assembly special reports on specific situations, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter. In this regard, my delegation, together with the delegation of Indonesia, submitted to the Security Council in 1996, a non-exhaustive list defining some of the cases in which the Security Council should present special reports to the General Assembly. We believe that this proposal should receive the attention it merits so as to promote the inter-relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, without affecting the balance established by the Charter between the two organs.

My delegation considers the exchange of information and views between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries a successful example that should enhance the work of the Council. We do not wish these meetings to be transformed into routine or symbolic

occasions, but to become a forum for candid and transparent discussions on all issues related to specific troops participating in peacekeeping operations. There are still many ways and means to improve the relationship between troop-contributing countries and the Security Council. We urge the Security Council to continue its efforts in exploring additional measures that would help achieve a better relationship, which would certainly reflect positively on the performance of such troops. We stress in particular the need to involve troop-contributing countries in the decision-making process more actively than is at present the case. This we consider both a statutory responsibility and a pragmatic and rational necessity.

Other measures to improve transparency of the work of the Security Council on a daily basis should also be the focus of our attention. Enhanced briefings by the presidency of the Council continue to be a viable option in this regard. Also, transparency is required with regard to oral reports presented by the Secretariat to the Security Council. We continue to urge the Security Council to take full stock of various proposals made in this regard, including the Open-ended Working Group on the reform and expansion of the Security Council, in order to agree on the most appropriate way to enhance the transparency with regard to the daily functions of the Council.

Egypt is a few months away from the end of its term in the Security Council and is more convinced than ever of the need for an annual report, as well as special reports which would establish a more transparent relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

We are sure that new non-permanent members of the Security Council will carry on further development of its reporting mechanism to the General Assembly and will work towards more transparency and openness. My delegation stands ready to participate in any collective effort towards that end.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I should like to express my heartfelt thanks to Ambassador Somavía for introducing this report and for his constant, daily efforts in this field.

The presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly should constitute a model of substantive reflection and debate not only on the work of the Council and the actions undertaken by that organ, presumably on behalf of all Member States, but also on existing and potential challenges facing the Organization in the sphere of maintaining international peace and security.

The requisite interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly is provided for in Article 24 of the Organization's Charter, which states that the Council shall submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration. At the same time, by virtue of Article 15 of the Charter, the General Assembly shall receive and consider annual and special reports from the Security Council. The Charter also provides that reports of the Security Council shall include an account of the measures that the Security Council has decided upon or taken to maintain international peace and security. It is therefore clear that the role of the General Assembly and the 185 Member States is to monitor the activities of the Security Council and, in the light of that exercise, to make recommendations, as they are authorized to do pursuant to Chapter IV of the Charter.

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the report submitted by the Council to the General Assembly once again constitutes a repetitious list of well-known resolutions and presidential statements adopted by the Council during the period in question and, unfortunately, does not include the necessary analyses of the root causes of the many and varied conflicts that the Security Council has dealt with or the basic principles and norms that guided the Council's actions.

There is no doubt that the voluminous format of the report of the Security Council is intended to reflect in some way the intensive work it has carried out in the past year. Nevertheless, in the opinion of the delegation of Cuba, a document like the report before the Assembly today is still of little use, and is valid only as a reference document. It is impossible to find in its pages, for example, reasoned evidence that, in the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council really has acted on behalf of and represented all the Organization's Member States.

One of the main aspects of the report is that relating to the Security Council's documentation. The delegation of Cuba recognizes that in recent years efforts have been made to improve this aspect of the work of the Council. We commend these efforts to the extent that they could contribute to the necessary process of democratization and transparency in the Council's decision-making, procedures and working methods. Nonetheless, we believe that these measures should, whatever the circumstances, be compatible with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and with the spirit of respect for and observance of the rights and

obligations recognized by the Charter, both of Member States and of the Security Council itself.

We continue to attach special importance to the process of preparing with Member States, and consulting them on, the list of items under consideration by the Council. Transparency in this exercise should be the basic premise of the daily work of the Council, as well as a reflection of the Security Council's recognition of its obligations towards the Organization's vast membership.

My delegation has noted with concern that, yet again, the report of the Security Council does not give any information on or analysis of the main trends that emerged during its debates in this period. We believe that such an analysis should be the starting point for the adoption of any decision by the Security Council. The opinions expressed or the decisions promoted in informal consultations by just some members of the Security Council, and in particular by some of its permanent members, should not continue to validate the Council's actions. Only substantive consideration by the Council of the legitimate interests and concerns expressed by Member States during the debates can accurately guide the Council in its work and provide it with the necessary and impartial information that will enable it to assess the real causes of conflicts, counteract their consequences and take action to find just and lasting solutions, free from politically motivated prejudices and not dominated by the illegitimate interests of just one country or a small group of countries.

Decisions adopted behind closed doors and ultimately dictated by the hegemonic and political interests of some permanent members of the Council have only led, and will continue to lead, to artificial formulas and solutions whose justification and effectiveness, sooner rather than later, have been and will continue to be overmatched by the real causes of the conflicts.

Recently, some degree of transparency has entered the work of the sanctions committees of the Security Council, and their decision-making processes have become more independent. Nonetheless, we believe that these bodies are still bound by the designs of some permanent members of the Council that continue to impose their interests on the decision-making process, in total disregard for the opinion of the international community, the internal situation of the countries that are subject to sanctions regimes and the response of those countries to the decisions and measures applied by the Council.

In this context, we would like to reiterate the view that the annual report of the Security Council should contain a substantive assessment of the work of the sanctions committees, instead of confining itself to giving a factual list of the resolutions and presidential statements adopted on the question of sanctions or of the coercive measures adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter.

On many occasions, many Member States have advocated special reports by the Security Council on measures that the Council has applied or decided to apply or in order to maintain international peace and security. In our opinion, in current international circumstances, when the conflicts besetting the world are increasingly antagonistic and complex, the General Assembly must utilize, de facto and *de jure*, the powers and authority conferred upon it by the Charter.

The discussion of special reports of the Security Council would enable the General Assembly to stay duly informed of the decisions and solutions that the Security Council is preparing to implement or has implemented in connection with certain special issues, and it would give the Assembly the chance to voice in timely fashion the opinions and recommendations it feels are necessary on a particular conflict or on possible action by the Council.

As in previous years, the delegation of Cuba reiterates its willingness to participate actively and constructively in the consideration of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

At present, the General Assembly is witnessing and participating in a process of reform of the Organization, aimed, as the Secretary-General has said, at enabling the Organization to meet the challenges of the day.

The Cuban delegation hopes that the work and actions of the Security Council, one of the principal organs of this Organization, entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security, will not be exempted from the spirit, the scrutiny and the objectives that inspire the process of reform.

Cuba also hopes that both in the consideration of the report of the Security Council and in the process of reform, the wisdom and sovereign will of the General Assembly, the only universally representative organ of this Organization, will receive due consideration.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the President of the Security Council for introducing the Council's annual report to the General Assembly.

In the past year the Security Council has done a lot of work and made fresh efforts in maintaining international peace and security. This should be duly recognized. We have also noted that starting this year, some alterations will be made to the format of the report. These efforts are undoubtedly aimed at enhancing the transparency of the Council's work. We hope that after such alterations, the report will help Member States better understand the work of the Council for the period covered.

In the wake of the changes on the international scene, particularly at this turn of the century, the Security Council, as a major organ of the United Nations, shoulders important responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, entrusted to it by the Charter. We hope that in fulfilling its responsibilities, the Council will fully heed the views of Member States so as to act truly on behalf of the entire membership.

Here I would like to make three points regarding the work of the Council.

First, for historical reasons and as a result of various complicated internal and external factors, there has been constant turbulence and conflict in some parts of Africa in the past year. We are of the view that the Council should attach importance to African issues and, in handling these issues, fully respect the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of African countries; carefully consider the reasonable proposals and demands of the Organization of African Unity and African countries; and support and cooperate with African countries in their efforts to maintain regional peace and security.

Peace and development are interrelated and mutually complementary. Efforts by the Council in the field of peacekeeping alone are far from enough. The international community should make greater efforts to bring about a fundamental solution to the question of development in Africa so as to help African countries move out of poverty at an early date and achieve lasting peace and stability.

Secondly, in recent years the Security Council has shown an obvious tendency to intervene in some countries' internal conflicts. We are of the view that in handling these important and complicated issues, the Council should observe the purposes and principles of the Charter, obtain the request or consent of the States or parties concerned, do its utmost to help resolve conflicts by peaceful means and encourage a proper role for regional organizations according to specific circumstances. It is necessary to refrain from practices such as interfering in a country's internal affairs under pretext of alleviating a humanitarian crisis, or authorizing military intervention by wilfully invoking Chapter VII of the Charter.

Thirdly, we have noted that instances of sanctions being authorized by the Council have increased in the past year. In principle, we are not in favour of using sanctions to settle disputes, and still less of using sanctions as a means of exerting pressure or meting out punishment. We are of the view that rather than rendering any help in the settlement of disputes and conflicts, sanctions only bring suffering to the people of target countries and cause economic loss and damage to third countries implementing the sanctions. Resolution 51/242, on sanctions, was adopted by consensus at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. The principles set forth in that resolution should serve as guidelines for our decision-making. In the few cases in which sanctions are necessary, we should have a clear objective, scope and time limit and should take humanitarian factors into full consideration. It is not proper to impose sanctions readily while making it difficult to lift them.

Today we are here to review the work of the Council and hear the views of Member States, with a view to helping the Council summarize its experience and draw on our collective wisdom so that it can better fulfil the mission entrusted to it by the Charter. We hope that with the joint efforts of the general membership and the Council members, the Council will live up to the expectations of the world's people and make further progress in maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Today's discussion of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, comprehensively presented by Ambassador Somavía of Chile, once again clearly demonstrates the special level of attention which the Member States give to this key political body in the United Nations structure.

It goes without saying that membership in this authoritative organ is considered to be an extremely important and honorary mission for each and every Member State. The growing competition for election to the Council is yet another proof of that.

At the same time, the right to hold one's finger on the planet's pulse is not just an honorary duty but is, first of all, tedious and strenuous work. This has been constantly proved by the essence of the issues considered by the Security Council and by its ability to prevent the further escalation of a number of conflicts before they entered an uncontrolled phase.

As recent positive examples of that, one may recall the operation of a multinational force in Albania and the assistance in holding free elections in Liberia and in Bosnia.

At the same time, we should admit that, in spite of substantial efforts on the part of the Security Council, many acute problems have not yet found their solution and continue to endanger international peace and security. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that the Security Council continue to concentrate its efforts on the remaining unresolved problems.

I would also like to note some positive changes in the organization of the Security Council's activities. The work of that body has definitely become more transparent, and its methods, in our opinion, increasingly meet the requirements of the present time. We believe that the present report appropriately reflects this tendency, which is in conformity with General Assembly resolution 51/193.

In this context, we must note the introduction of orientation discussions held before the Security Council's adoption of responsible decisions. The participation of the interested parties in such discussions not only makes it possible to consider the problem in a comprehensive manner, but also provides for a search for optimal ways to achieve its solution.

Our delegation also notes with satisfaction the steady improvement of the mechanism of periodical consultations between contributing States, members of the Security Council and the United Nations Secretariat. This useful practice should be further developed. The Security Council should always be prepared to arrange such consultations at the request of potential contributing States in the event of emergency situations.

The delegation of Ukraine also fully supports the idea of introducing into the work of the Security Council the practice of preparing monthly reports on the outcome of that month's presidency, since this would contribute to the analytical essence of its report to the General Assembly. To this end, we propose to request the Council's working group on documentation, methods of work and procedure not only to study the issue of the preparation of the Council's annual report, but also to elaborate relevant proposals with regard to the practical implementation of such a concept.

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the need to establish a closer interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly, which would potentially improve the efficiency of the activities both of the Security Council and of the entire United Nations membership. We strongly believe that the practice begun at the beginning of this session of the Assembly of regular meetings between the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council should become regular. We would also recommend that such meetings be attended by the Secretary-General. Such meetings of the United Nations troika — a format successfully applied with reference to the activities of such recognized regional structures as the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — could also be instrumental in the case of the United Nations. Acceptance and implementation of such a proposal would, in our view, serve to fulfil our desire to make the United Nations more effective and able to withstand the challenges of the present time.

I hope that the current discussion of the report of the Security Council and the proposals of Members will help that body better to fulfil its major mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): Germany welcomes the presentation of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, and thanks the Council President, Ambassador Juan Somavía of Chile, for his introductory remarks. The report reflects the vast agenda the Council had to deal with between June 1996 and June 1997. The mere numbers tell us enough: 115 formal meetings held; 52 resolutions adopted; 54 presidential statements issued. The main questions considered by the Council were related to the former Yugoslavia, Angola, the Great Lakes region, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Burundi, Iraq and Kuwait and Tajikistan — without ignoring the importance of the many other issues the Council had to deal with.

Most of these facts are familiar. I will therefore not elaborate on them, but rather draw attention to three simple questions. First, has the presentation of the report changed since last year? Secondly, is there room for

further improvement? Thirdly, are there links between the report and Security Council reform?

I begin with changes since last year. Many of us still remember the widespread dissatisfaction expressed in previous years in the General Assembly regarding the report's format and contents. With this in mind, the General Assembly on 17 December 1996 adopted a resolution (51/193) on the report containing various recommendations to improve the interaction between Council and Assembly. This year's report demonstrates positive changes. It is again shorter, and it is presented earlier.

In reply to the second question, there is surely a strong need for further improvement in the report. A possible silver lining seems to be the agreement among Security Council members to take up some of the main concerns of the General Assembly and to include background lists; a description in chronological order of Council consideration and action; information regarding subsidiary organs of the Council such as sanctions committees; and information regarding documentation, working methods and procedures of the Council. The commitments are contained in the presidential note (S/1997/451) of 12 June this year.

From an analytic point of view, the most far-reaching future element will be the assessments of the work of the Council prepared by the respective Presidents of the Security Council and attached as an addendum to the report. Ambassador Monteiro of Portugal deserves credit for having given much thought to this new instrument for openness and transparency of the Council and for having set an early and voluntary example of a presidential assessment. The Republic of Korea, Sweden and the United Kingdom have also submitted assessments since then. All of them deserve applause and credit for providing analytic elements to the reports. If this direction is followed, the report may become a truly helpful instrument for more transparency in the work of the Council.

Thirdly, the links between Security Council reform and our agenda item — the report of the Security Council — are quite clear. The report is frequently mentioned in proposals for Security Council reform. For instance, the "full-picture" proposal of the previous President of the General Assembly (A/51/47, annex II) devotes an entire paragraph to the report. But, as is the case with other documents, it is only one out of many points of the reform package, from number of seats to elections to the veto right to transparency and working methods. Only the full range of these measures will finally bring about Security Council reform as we would like to see it, with a new team, a new spirit of work, new resources and new approaches.

Thanks to a surprising initiative taken last week, there is again currently much talk at the United Nations about Security Council reform. That initiative, which was sponsored by, among others, the champions of transparency, was submitted — as far as my delegation is concerned — out of the blue and without earlier discussion in the Open-ended Working Group. We shall have to adapt to this new style.

Even the best possible report of the Council will remain an insufficient instrument of transparency if the Organization does not take on the challenge of including it in the full picture of Security Council reform. Let us give the Security Council more tools and more people to use them smoothly. Let us not lean back and expect reform to happen. It has to be brought about. Germany will continue to work with other Members towards that end.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/52/PV.39

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-second Session

39th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 29 October 1997, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 11 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/52/2)

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): I wish to thank the current President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Chile, for having presented this year's report (A/52/2) on the Council's activity with his usual eloquence and brilliance. The improvements that have been introduced into the annual reports in recent years deserve to be acknowledged as a positive development from the point of view of the enhancement of transparency and accountability in the Council's work, which has come to represent a universally shared objective.

Indeed, with the intensification of the Council's work during the present decade, such improvements in reporting have become not only desirable, but indispensable. They should be seen as part of an ongoing process which should, hopefully, dovetail with the results of the discussions on the so-called cluster II issues being dealt with in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the efforts of individual delegations in keeping States members that are not in the Council as well briefed as possible on what goes on during the informal consultations. We wish to thank in particular all those former Council Presidents who have taken up the responsibility of circulating a summary of the activity during their presidencies. The pioneer role of the Ambassador of Portugal in this respect deserves a special word of recognition.

The period covered by the latest report has been one of mixed results in terms of the Council's capacity to effectively deal with the different sources of instability around the world. In certain regions the Council seems to have been able to assist in containing violence, and even in reversing it. Central America is a case in point. With the successful conclusion of the military observer Mission in Guatemala, the definitive ceasefire between the Government and the URNG has established the necessary conditions for the promotion of peace and development in a subregion of the Americas which has been particularly vulnerable to pernicious blends of internal strife and external interference. We are pleased to note that the entire isthmus today is making important strides in its struggle for the creation of better living conditions for its inhabitants, and that integration on the basis of shared values is progressing.

Unfortunately, the same degree of confidence can still not be expressed with regard to the situation in Haiti. The United Nations presence in Haiti has helped to improve the security situation in the country and contributed to the training of a national police force. But in the absence of clearer signs of economic rehabilitation and reconstruction — for which the decided support of the international community is essential — the Security

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Council will have difficulty in placing that country on a sustained path to full institutional recovery. Hopefully, this Caribbean nation, for which Brazilians feel a natural affinity, will be able to build upon the relative stability of the past three years and soon cease to be dealt with in the context of United Nations efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security.

We look forward to the elimination of the last item on the Council's agenda dealing with a situation in the Americas, as a reflection of the democratic renaissance in our part of the world. It is worth mentioning in this regard that with the recent entry into force of the Protocol of Washington to the Charter of the Organization of American States, the hemisphere will have at its disposal a strong instrument for dealing with threats to democratically elected Governments.

An inordinate amount of the Council's attention has been focused on Africa in the past year. The recent ministerial meeting of the Council, which took place under the presidency of the United States, constituted a timely and useful exercise in assessing present trends in a continent which is undergoing momentous transformations. The summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity earlier this year was hailed by many as an event which signalled a new era of growing cooperation among a generation of leaders determined to face up to the many challenges confronting them. The Security Council must learn how to tap the new political resources that have emerged in the wake of the dismantling of apartheid in Africa and must work closely with those leaders who have committed themselves to peace and democracy. Needless to say, this comparatively favourable political climate could be short-lived if the international community were to dedicate exclusive attention to security matters and show indifference to the continent's many difficulties in the social and economic realm.

A number of positive developments in some parts of Africa coexist with others that still give cause for concern. In Liberia, a successful electoral process has allowed the termination of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, and the prospects for reconciliation are the best in years. In Western Sahara, progress is being made towards the fulfilment of the conditions for the holding of a referendum, with an active role being played by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. James Baker.

Angola remains a source of considerable concern for my Government. The imposition of additional sanctions on the party which has consistently failed to meet its obligations under the Lusaka Protocol had become unavoidable. As a major contributor of troops to the United Nations Angola Verification Mission in its various formats, and as a sister lusophone nation, Brazil cannot but underline its deep unease in the face of the seemingly endless tension in Angola, and once again professes its intention to continue to support serious efforts at bringing about the necessary conditions for peace and prosperity for all Angolans.

Having touched on the subject of action under Chapter VII, I would like to note that we have been following with concern the tendency to place internal situations that do not have an obvious impact on regional or international security into that framework. Not long ago, it was said that the international press was responsible for placing items on the Council's agenda, and certain representatives commented, not entirely in jest, that the Cable News Network (CNN) had become the sixteenth member of the Security Council. More recently, however, we have come to witness a different phenomenon, with situations that have never been on the front page of major newspapers being placed in the context of the framework reserved by the Charter for the most serious threats to international peace and security. We would have preferred, for example, that the regional action which has been authorized by the Council to improve security conditions in the Central African Republic had been placed in the context of the pacific settlement of disputes. Action under Chapter VII, whether of a non-military nature such as sanctions or involving the use of force, must remain an option of last resort, to be contemplated only when all efforts to salvage peace through diplomacy and peacekeeping carried out with the consent of the parties have clearly failed. The international community should resist lowering the threshold for invoking Chapter VII and prevent careless resort to coercive measures from endangering the Council's credibility.

The extremely violent conflicts that erupted in the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of this decade are still producing repercussions in the newly independent republics of the Balkans. There are lessons to be learned from the Council's initial lack of a coherent plan for dealing with the Balkan tragedy, and the implementation of the Dayton peace plan has yet to establish itself as the irreversible blueprint for reconciliation in Bosnia. The Security Council retains a fundamental role in keeping the situation in the Balkans under close scrutiny in the

months ahead, in close coordination with all other efforts being carried out in the region.

Brazil will be returning to the Security Council next January for its eighth two-year period as a non-permanent member. We wish to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to discharge this responsibility in full compliance with our traditional adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter, and as a nation which has lived in peace with all of its 10 neighbours for more than 120 years. We also wish to express our intention to do our utmost to live up to the trust the General Assembly has once again placed in us by remaining in close contact with non-members, individually and in groups, and by building upon the work of the many who have been trying to enhance the Council's transparency and accountability in recent years. We will devote particular attention to devising appropriate channels for close and continuous communication with our Latin American and Caribbean friends in order to adequately reflect their concerns, to the extent possible, and to keep them apprised of the Council's decision-making process. As a country with a solid record of consensus building, we look forward to collaborating with other Council members in translating the expectations raised by the end of the cold war into a more peaceful and cooperative international environment for all.

Let me conclude with some brief observations on the important subject of Security Council expansion. After four years of intensive discussion in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, the process of Security Council reform has gained momentum in the past year through transparent deliberations that benefitted greatly from firm leadership. The issues are now well known. The creation of artificial procedural obstacles to Security Council reform through delaying tactics and surprise manoeuvres is not constructive. That is a mistaken path that does not lead to the more representative and legitimate Security Council that the great majority of the United Nations membership, in the developing world in particular, desires.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): We have studied the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly with great attention, and we would like to thank all the members of the Council for their determined effort to foster peace and security around the world. The report underscores the remarkable progress that has been achieved by the international community in bringing peace and stability to several regions of the world.

Peace and tranquillity, however fragile and feeble, now prevail in the Balkans thanks to the unremitting efforts of the international community. The Security Council, in its wisdom, has established that the continued presence of international peacekeepers both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in eastern Croatia is indispensable for the creation of an atmosphere conducive to peaceful dialogue and reconciliation in the Balkans. The Council has recognized that there is still much work to be done before the Balkan peace process can reach the point of irreversibility. The Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia continues to serve with distinction, and its efforts should be encouraged. Similarly, in eastern Croatia, the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) has been able to disarm and demobilize the combatants, and substantial progress has consequently been made in the peace process in the area.

Everything points to a promising future in Haiti because of the determination of the international community to consolidate democratic rule in that Caribbean nation. The recent political wrangles should not be allowed to disturb the new-found peace in Haiti. In the final analysis, however, it is the people of Haiti themselves who must strive tirelessly to deepen the roots of their hard-earned democracy through national reconciliation and the denunciation of a culture of impunity.

Earlier this year, when fighting flared up in Albania, the Security Council moved quickly and in a timely manner to put out the flames of war that could have engulfed the whole region. It adopted resolution 1101 (1997), which authorized the intervention of a multinational protection force in Albania. We wish such expeditious action could become the hallmark of the Council in all — I repeat, all — conflict situations.

Africa has clearly been less fortunate in receiving equally vigorous commitments to the resolution of its conflicts than other parts of the world. During the two years that my country served in the Security Council, from 1995 to 1996, it was evident that lack of a resolute response by the Council to international conflict situations could have long-term disastrous consequences. This was clearly demonstrated in Central Africa, where the conflict which erupted in Rwanda in 1994 was allowed to smoulder unchecked until it degenerated into a genocidal conflagration.

The situation has worsened, and the region is now engulfed in hostilities which have claimed one Government after another. It is not clear where the vortex is headed, or if it is stoppable. Something needs to be done before every country in the subregion is consumed by this political and military whirlwind. The Council has missed many opportunities to prevent the conflict from spreading and threatening the security of the entire subregion. If nothing is done — and urgently — to arrest the situation at this stage, we may be awakened by violence of unmitigated proportions tomorrow. We do not believe there is a Member State of this Organization which would like to witness that eventuality.

Just recently the Council watched with shocking indifference as the people of Congo (Brazzaville) were plunged into a bloodbath. The insistence by the Council that the Congolese militias should declare and observe a ceasefire before the United Nations could deploy peacekeeping forces at the airport in Brazzaville was, in our view, bereft of a sense of responsibility by an organ of this Organization whose responsibility it is to maintain peace and security in the world, Africa included.

The Security Council should apply uniform criteria to all conflict situations around the world. Merely appealing to the conflicting parties to exercise restraint and resolve their differences peacefully, as has been the case with the recent conflicts in Central Africa, is obviously not enough. This approach has not worked.

The time has come to address the problems of the subregion squarely and concretely, including ending the conflicts themselves, the restoration of democratic rule, respect for international humanitarian law and protection of human rights. The Security Council cannot, unfortunately, afford to remain indifferent to situations in which democratically elected Governments are overthrown with reckless impunity and in situations in which there is not one iota of respect for the sanctity of human life.

When the General Assembly considered the report of the Security Council last year, my delegation was among those which were not happy with the descriptive nature of the report. It is unfortunate that the report is still being presented in the same fashion this year. As it is, the report does not give the reader a clear picture of the activities of the Council in the past year. We believe that there are ways in which the operations of the Council could become more open and transparent, without compromising the effectiveness of the Council. A more succinct report could be one of the ways. In the circumstances, it is evident that Security Council reform, in all its permutations, is the imperative of our times. It is only through reform that the nature and format of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, among others, could assume the semblance of an informative and action-oriented document. The Council has to be attuned to present-day international realities if it is to remain relevant and responsive to the hopes and aspirations of humankind for world peace today. We have to move to the negotiations stage in the Security Council reform process.

Mr. Crighton (Australia): I have listened with great interest to earlier statements under this agenda item, and I must say that in many of them I find a strong resonance with the views of the Australian delegation. I refer in particular to those views relating to the importance of greater openness and transparency in the work of the Security Council.

I would like in particular to record Australia's appreciation for the efforts of the Republic of Korea and other Security Council members that have made a special effort to respond to the needs of the broader membership. I was particularly struck by Ambassador Park Soo Gil's reference to the "loungers" — that is, the people who have to mill around outside the room hoping for scraps to fall from the lips of those who have left the deliberations.

I would like to make just two key points this afternoon. First of all, we note and we substantially agree with the concerns many have raised with regard to the usefulness of the annual report. Now, this is a very important vehicle for providing information that non-members have every right, I think, to expect. Therefore, we welcome the changes that have been foreshadowed for next year's report, as outlined in the note of the President of the Council on 12 June 1997.

We are also particularly pleased by the monthly assessments, an innovation introduced by the Portuguese President of the Council, which we applaud. They will now be made an addendum to the annual report. The new monthly assessments began in July, are a work in development, and they provide useful background information on the development of issues that are debated in the Council. These monthly assessments, I think, are a positive contribution to the principles of openness and transparency.

The second point I would like to make is that Australia agrees with the importance other delegations have placed on the briefings given by the President of the Council following informal meetings. The briefings, which are an essential element in the implementation of the principle of openness and transparency, are to us a very important source of information. That is why it is vital that these briefings are as detailed as possible, and also that they take place promptly. Australia — and I am sure many other delegations — would like to see a more systematic and structured arrangement for these briefings — in other words, to meet the needs of the people we referred to as "the loungers".

Some delegations earlier and elsewhere have pointed to the fact that these briefings are a two-way process. To that extent, those delegations are quite right to point out that in some cases the briefings are not well attended. However, I think the representative of Malaysia made a very good point this morning, when he said that the lack of interest may, at least in part, be due to the fact that these briefings are either not sufficiently detailed or they do not go beyond what is given earlier in the day to the media. I think we can do a little better than that, and we would like to see something a little more structured and better targeted to the needs of the Members of this place, rather than to those of the media.

There are, of course, I hasten to add, many exceptions, and Australia wishes to thank those members of the Security Council that have made a conscientious effort to keep the general membership informed and involved. We thank them very much for that.

In summary, some progress is being made to pursue greater openness and transparency, and Australia and, I am sure, the rest of us very much welcome that. We hope that we can build on that and we look forward to a better process in the future.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to consider the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly covering the period from 15 June 1996 to 14 June 1997. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to Ambassador Somavía, President of the Council this month, for his lucid and concise introduction of the report. As a member of the Council, Japan is pleased to associate itself with his presentation.

At the outset, I should like to emphasize that Japan attaches great importance to improving the working methods of the Security Council. In particular, my delegation has consistently supported strengthening the relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly and enhancing the transparency of the Security Council. It was precisely for this purpose, for example, that when Japan assumed the presidency of the Security Council last January, it held daily briefings on the work of the Council for interested States that were not members. It has made this position clear in the course of discussions on Security Council reform. At the same time, Japan stresses that improving relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly should be dealt with as part of a comprehensive package that also addresses the issues of the composition and expansion of the Security Council.

Since becoming a member of the Council in January, Japan has been participating actively in its intensive discussions on this issue. In June an agreement was reached to the effect that in future years the Council's report to the General Assembly would be made in a new format. As Ambassador Somavía has explained in detail, the report would contain concrete reform measures, with brief assessments, by Permanent Representatives who have served as Presidents of the Security Council, attached as an addendum. Japan recognized that this agreement, which responded to the calls of many countries for improving the report of the Security Council, represented a significant step forward. The Security Council has decided once again to continue studying and reviewing this issue with a view to further improving its documents and procedures. For its part, Japan will continue to support that worthy endeavour.

In closing, I should like to recall the main objective of reform, which is to strengthen the functions of the United Nations as a whole. An essential means of achieving that end is to render the activities of the Security Council more effective by enhancing its work methods — including its relations with the General Assembly — and by expanding and reforming it. I wish to assure you, Mr. President, that Japan is committed to the attainment of these goals so as to ensure that the Council has the capacity to discharge its responsibilities for the maintenance of world peace and security, as prescribed in the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): The President of the Security Council, Ambassador Somavía, has already outlined the main elements in the present report of the Council and has pointed out relevant questions addressed during the period under consideration regarding the improvement of the methods of work of the Council.

Portugal welcomes the decision taken by the Council as a result of which, starting next year, a new type of annual report from the Security Council will be submitted to the General Assembly. The new type of report will include a more user-friendly analytical description of the Council's work, and brief monthly assessments by former Presidents of the Council will be attached to the report as an addendum.

My delegation is pleased to have contributed to this outcome of the discussions entered into by Council members this year in the informal working group on documentation and procedural questions. We believe that this is not only a serious response from the Council to the specific measures requested by General Assembly resolution 51/193, but also a positive step towards enhancing the transparency of the Council.

This is a dynamic evolutionary process, and more can certainly be done. For example, since last year the annual report has contained references to the activities of the sanctions committees. It seems reasonable, therefore, to expect the reports of these committees to be attached to the annual report of the Security Council.

As Portugal has been a member of the Council since January, my delegation is now in a position to consider the practice of the Council from an inside perspective and has submitted to Council members a number of its own observations for discussion. One concerns the manner in which the decision-making process of the Council is presently developed in informal meetings, the so-called consultations of the whole. In our experience, the prevalence of informal consultations has not brought substantial gains in expediting the Council's work or making it more efficient. Rather, it has made the Council less transparent and has widened the gap between the Council and the rest of the membership.

Informal consultations can and should take place whenever necessary to assist members in the consideration of certain matters, as occurs in any other United Nations body. But they should not systematically replace regular formal sessions of the Council, at which members should state their views on the matters under consideration and hear other United Nations Members, if the Council so decides. On the other hand, according to the Charter and the existing provisional rules of procedure, the Council can always meet in private formal sessions whenever confidentiality is required. Clearly, in this matter, a balance must be found.

In fact, the main distinctive element that distinguishes formal meetings from informal consultations of the whole is the fact that in the latter there are no written records. We believe that dispensing with written records, which is currently the established practice because most of the work is conducted in informal meetings, does not contribute to the enhancement of the credibility of the Council. Records not only promote the consistency of Security Council decisions, but also assert the responsibility of each member, thus ensuring their accountability before the entire United Nations membership.

Formal sessions, public or private, with written records, will improve transparency. According to the Charter, all United Nations Members are entitled to follow closely the Council's activities. Not only should they be able to obtain information directly by attending regular formal sessions, but they should also have access to reliable written records, including those of sessions held in private, if their particular interest is recognized by the Council.

In our view, the current practice by which non-members of the Council gather information at the end of consultations of the whole is most improper. Information can be easily manipulated or is one-sided. Unfortunately, a majority of United Nations Members choose this way of gathering information, instead of attending the presidency's daily briefings, which should be truly informative.

Another way to increase the contribution of the entire United Nations membership to the activities and decisions of the Council, as other delegations have stressed, would be to ensure active participation by troop-contributing countries in the decision-making phase of the Council's deliberations regarding peacekeeping or peace-enforcement operations. We are not alone in our dissatisfaction with the manner in which meetings of troop-contributing countries are now conducted.

One other related aspect, which my delegation has also brought to the attention of the Council and which is currently under discussion in the informal working group on documentation and procedural questions, concerns the use — or rather, the misuse — that has been made of the so-called Arria formula meetings.

We realize that, somehow, inaccurate ideas have spread among the United Nations membership, even among Council members, on this extremely useful

mechanism. The value of the Arria formula meetings lies precisely in the informal and flexible manner of channelling information and input from essentially non-State actors directly into the Council. The most authoritative source on this formula for meetings — its creator, Ambassador Diego Arria — confirmed recently to Council members, at an Arria-style meeting organized by Portugal, that this was what the formula was designed for, starting with guests such as a Bosnian priest, a British parliamentarian on the situation of the Iraqi marsh population, and a representative of the non-governmental organization Africa Watch.

Yet in the lists of Arria formula meetings, which we were able to trace back to 1993, when they started, we find at least 10 heads of state and government and over 15 ministers among them. That means that almost 60 per cent of all guests, so far, have been representatives of States or Governments. Did they all prefer the Arria formula, knowing that there would be no written records? Were they fully aware of the implications of that informal format? Why were they not accorded formal meetings of the Council, as provided for by Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter and rules 37 and 38 of the provisional rules of procedure?

We will be pleased to share with interested delegations a paper with more detailed Portuguese views on the use and merits of the Arria formula, which we find to be a tool with extraordinary potential. Here, I would just like to stress that we believe that Arria-style meetings should be used whenever there is a need to preserve informality. They are informal by nature. We should not, therefore, attempt to create norms to regulate them. They have their own function within the informal activities of Security Council members. But, their use should not preclude the utilization of other formal mechanisms provided for by the Charter and the provisional rules of procedure.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Portugal shares with the majority of United Nations Members a particular concern with the transparency of the Council. Indeed, in this respect, our experience in the Security Council since last January has led us to conclude how crucial it is to promote a serious review of the working methods of the Council if we really wish to strengthen its transparency, credibility and efficiency. This is particularly decisive at a moment when the enlargement of the Security Council is very much on the agenda of the global reform of the United Nations. Let us not have any illusions: if its methods of work remain the same, the Council's enlargement will not, by itself, bring about a more efficient, accountable and credible organ.

Ms. Donde Odinga (Kenya): My delegation welcomes this year's report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, contained in document A/52/2, and we are grateful to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Somavía of Chile, for introducing it. During this period, Kenya was elected to a two-year term on the Security Council beginning in January 1997.

The submission of an annual report by the Security Council has become a useful exercise which enables the membership of the United Nations to assess the work of the Council. In that connection, the present report speaks for itself in terms of the quantity of work covered during that period. The President of the Security Council, in his introduction this morning, informed us of the progress made so far in improving the content and value of the report, as well as the further steps that need to be taken to ensure that the reporting procedures of the Council meet the aspirations of all the Members of the United Nations, as expressed in General Assembly resolution 51/193 of 1996.

Our contribution to this debate on the report and, therefore, on enhancing the transparency of the Council's working methods will be limited to observing a number of specific issues. We believe that the results of the informal working group, when fully implemented, will be a first step towards making the current procedures more transparent and informative. The reports will also have, as an addendum, monthly assessments by Presidents of the Council.

The decision to include the monthly assessments as an addendum to the Council's report is a very useful undertaking which began in June this year. My delegation believes that an analytical addition to the report will provide critical insights into the issues, thereby enabling a better reading of the situations in question, as well as the actions that need to be taken. We strongly believe that these assessments will enable other Member States to gain access to current thinking and trends within the Council.

My delegation agrees with the assessment of Ambassador Somavía that the briefing sessions of the presidency, open to all Members of the United Nations, are not always very well attended. In addition, inquiries on the issues before the Council are constrained by the tradition of confidentiality that surrounds informal consultations. Thus any reporting of what takes place in informal Council meetings may not be very useful to Member States. We therefore agree with the view that we

should be able to improve the usefulness and scope of these sessions by working together.

The issuing of statements to the press by the President of the Security Council is another area we would briefly like to comment on. During Kenya's presidency of the Security Council in February this year, we were made to understand that releasing the written statements to the press and Member States was equivalent to formalizing informality. That is, since the consultations were informal, anything written thereafter, even if it had been read to the press and represented as an accepted position of all Council members, was not appropriate because it assumed a formal appearance. In contrast, we believe that if a statement has been read to the press, it should be appropriate to provide it to Members of the United Nations present at the briefing, to whom we should be more responsive.

The meetings of troop-contributing countries tend to be formal and, indeed, sometimes pro forma, with individual national problems having being resolved at the Secretariat level. There is a need to make them more dynamic, relevant, rewarding and effective for all concerned. We are also aware that many other proposals on the working procedures of the Council have been made at meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, and we look forward to discussing them with other delegations.

Allow me to discuss a disturbing trend we have observed with respect to agenda items on Africa, which currently make up 65 per cent of the work of the Security Council. Ten months of Kenya's two-year tenure in the Security Council have gone by. The logic and relative predictability that governed international relations during the cold war have gone, leaving in their place an ensuing free-for-all that has had far-reaching results for international peace and security. In Africa, for example, we have seen democratically elected Governments, as well as dictatorships, deposed by military means. We have witnessed States invading other States with little or no condemnation from the international community and, in fact, in some cases, we have observed tacit support for such illegality.

It has become clear that the manner in which the international community responds to events is extremely important to how such events develop. In the case of Sierra Leone, this coup was unanimously and unreservedly condemned by the international community. Consequently, it is expected that in six months, the legal regime will be reinstated and the soldiers will return to barracks. In contrast, however, in the case of the Congo (Brazzaville), the international community's condemnation of the overthrow of the democratically elected Government of President Lissouba was amazingly lukewarm. A few months ago, when the crisis was heating up, the Secretary-General called for the urgent deployment of a peacekeeping force in the Congo (Brazzaville). This call, which my delegation supported, was not heeded. General Sassou-Nguesso is now in control in the Congo (Brazzaville). We ask ourselves what happened to those principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nation States that we hold so dear and cherish so much? Have we discarded them? Or are we only going to apply them selectively? We feel this trend will undermine the moral authority with which this Assembly and the Security Council can speak against illegal regimes. Kenya believes that the international community should carefully guard against this trend.

Finally, Kenya will continue to participate actively in the Security Council's working group on documentation and procedures, which we believe has enabled a healthy light of transparency to shine more in the Council. It is a good thing in itself to prepare quality reports, but it is even more important to make the Council not only more transparent, but more effective by making it a more proactive rather than a reactive body.

Mr. Duval (Canada): This debate on the report of the Security Council for the period 16 June 1996 to 15 June 1997 is welcome both as an exercise in transparency and as a reminder that the Security Council belongs to the United Nations membership as a whole. We thank the Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Juan Somavía, for having introduced the report to the General Assembly.

With respect to methods of work, my delegation greatly appreciates the real effort made by individual Council members to enhance transparency in Security Council operations. The daily briefings are useful, and we acknowledge the attention that Council Presidents accorded to the practice during the period covered by the report. The opening to non-members of the Council of meetings which are essentially informative in nature, including certain briefings by the Secretary-General or other United Nations representatives and meetings now held under the Arria formula, would be appreciated.

My delegation is encouraged by the efforts of some Council members to obtain access to additional sources

of information, and we believe it to be entirely appropriate that the Council should benefit from the expertise of representatives of non-governmental organizations. But it would be wrong for non-governmental organizations to have better access to the Council than do Member States. This incongruity is exemplified by the experience of my delegation. Having assumed a mandate from the Security Council to lead a multinational force in eastern Zaire, Canada found itself excluded from the Council's discussion of that crisis with representatives of non-governmental organizations.

Canada supports other mechanisms, such as the groups of friends of the Secretary-General which, especially in the case of Haiti, have allowed countries with a particular interest in a Security Council matter a measure of influence on the Council's deliberations. We would, however, also welcome efforts which would allow Member States that are directly affected by Council action to be able to state their views directly to the entire Council before decisions are taken in closed consultations. This includes major troop contributors, who should have input into decisions that might affect the very lives of their nationals. Greater participation by non-members in these areas would, we believe, only strengthen the Council's credibility and effectiveness.

We heard with interest the statement this morning by the representative of Germany. We fully agree with him that transparency depends on those Member States serving on the Council. We do not believe that improvements in transparency and methods of work need to wait until Security Council reform is fully implemented. Indeed, contributing to this shared objective of achieving greater transparency in the Council's method of work has been a principal objective for Canada in putting forward our candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 1999-2000.

With respect to the Council's substantive agenda, the report before us speaks of the Security Council's attempt to grapple with such difficult issues as demining in the context of peacekeeping operations, ensuring the security of United Nations and other personnel, and the protection of refugees and displaced persons. We applaud the Council's efforts. Our candidature for the non-permanent Council seat is guided by a desire to contribute substantially to the Council's efforts to achieve progress on these and related issues, which would include the impact on regional security of traffic in small arms.

All Member States have a role in ensuring that the United Nations remains capable of fulfilling the peace and security mandate that, along with the promotion of economic and social development, is at the very core of its purpose.

The report before us bears witness to the decrease in the amount of peacekeeping being done by the Security Council. Let us recall that, only two years ago, there were 80,000 peacekeepers at the service of the United Nations worldwide. By June 1996, this number had declined to 26,300. This number is now projected to decline further to 13,000 by the end of this year, and 3,000 of these will be civilian police.

We are concerned that the unfortunate reality is that the number of conflicts in the world has in no way abated. We do not believe that, in response, the answer is always to deploy more peacekeepers. However, it is our fundamental belief that the United Nations must remain engaged in the business of peacekeeping. There has been an increased tendency for the Security Council to rely instead on multinational "coalitions of the willing" to carry out peacekeeping functions and mandates. While we acknowledge that in many situations such coalitions are the only viable mechanism to resolve a crisis, we would urge the Council to remain a key player; the deployment of multinational forces does not for a moment mean that the Council should wash its hands of the matter. As the world's expert on peacekeeping, it continues to have an invaluable role to play.

Canada welcomes the increased collaboration between the United Nations and regional and subregional bodies that is evident in this report. Such bodies are becoming effective instruments for the promotion of regional peace and security. For example, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Committee of Five are to be commended for their success in security support for the ECOWAS peace plan in Sierra Leone.

Canada supports greater collaboration with the Organization of African Unity in the development of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. We look forward to continued cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in capacity-building for preventive diplomacy, so that crises can be resolved at an early stage and we can look forward to the day when peacekeeping is no longer required at all.

In conclusion, my delegation greatly appreciates the Security Council's ongoing efforts in carrying out its mandate. Our intention today is to offer constructive observations, with the objective of assisting the Council in undertaking its obligations. The Council can continue to rely upon Canada's cooperation.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ambassador Juan Somavía of Chile for his careful introduction of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

We are all immersed in the discussion of structural aspects of the United Nations, but this should not delay work on the basis of the existing structures to improve the transparency of its main organs. In other words, the legitimate hopes for a more efficient and democratic Organization as a result of reform cannot stand in the way of the urgent need to improve the institutions that we now have.

This conclusion seems to us particularly applicable to the work of the Security Council. I note that its report, contained in document A/52/2, includes certain improvements as compared to the report submitted in 1996. One is the inclusion in appendix X of a list of meetings of the Security Council and troop-contributing countries, chaired by the President of the Security Council.

We are also pleased to see that this report, where it refers to the outcome of the working group on documentation and procedure, reproduces document S/1997/451, which enumerates the various elements the Council's report should contain.

We consider the decision to include in future reports the assessments of former Presidents of the Council to be an encouraging advance. We are especially grateful to those delegations that have already circulated such assessments for the months of their presidencies. Here, we refer, in particular, to Sweden and the United Kingdom. Such assessments are an important, if limited and provisional, step towards greater transparency, since they provide a written record of the statements of the President to the press with regard to certain items that are considered in informal consultations. Those delegations that have promoted the practice of presidential assessments, such as Chile, Costa Rica, and, in particular, Portugal, as well as Sweden, Japan, Egypt, Angola, Kenya, among others, deserve the gratitude of all Member States.

Without detracting from these advances, we also note that this year's Security Council report, unlike last year's, does not tell us the number of informal consultations that were held, but simply indicates how much time was spent in such meetings. We believe that the number of informal consultations held by the Security Council in the course of a year is not merely an irrelevant or superficial matter. On the contrary, it is information that gives non-members an idea of the extent to which the work of the Council has been conducted by means of procedures for which there is no record whatsoever.

Furthermore, when the report of the Security Council was presented by the Secretariat, the fact that it includes more information on the work done by the various sanctions committees was emphasized. This is a good thing. However, we do not see progress on the amount and substance of the information provided. Since such reports partly concern commercial activities, greater transparency would help avoid problems and unfortunate attempts to violate sanctions, attempts which sometimes occur precisely because of a lack of information.

The practice followed by successive presidencies of the Council of briefing those delegations that are not members is by now well established, and is properly appreciated by most Member States. We regret the fact that at those briefings Member States are not given more information than that which appears in the press. A recent assessment by a former President of the Security Council points out that while contacts between the President and the press take place on a daily basis, contacts with countries that are not members of the Council are confined to the days when informal consultations are held. This analysis is obviously not very encouraging to Member States of the United Nations, and to some extent it explains why such briefings are so poorly attended.

The importance of keeping the media informed on what takes place in the Security Council is indisputable. But at the same time it is hard to accept that our own capitals should receive through the press information which by rights should be obtained at first hand and in the Council Chamber itself.

Furthermore, if public opinion and parliaments are kept at the margin of the most important aspect of the United Nations activity, peace and security, it will be increasingly difficult for such crucial sectors to accept the

usefulness of this Organization at a time of crisis and scant resources in national budgets.

The report of the Council should not be the only source of information on the Council's work. The Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council used to be one of the ways for Member States to become familiar with the precedents followed by the Council in its interpretations of the Charter and its own rules of procedure.

The publication of this Repertoire is more than 10 years behind schedule, which creates difficulties for countries that become members of the Security Council, for the press and for parliamentarians, who cannot understand how such a shortcoming can be tolerated by a principle organ of the United Nations. Its actual practice must therefore be compiled objectively to ensure that all groups are familiar with it. We hope that the United Nations will quickly update that material, whose publication has suffered from budgetary restrictions that are difficult to reconcile with the importance we attach to the Security Council.

There are many times when in the United Nations, and especially in the Council, countries are urged to respect the principles that inspire democratic legitimacy. The last such case was the case of Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, public opinion sees that the procedures followed by the Council do not appear to be in keeping with such principles. The lack of transparency is clear when decisions are adopted in meetings to which the other 170 Members of the United Nations do not have access. But what is even more difficult to explain to public opinion is that in such informal consultations high Secretariat officials render reports to which the other Members of the United Nations which contribute to the funding of the Organization have no access. This is a particularly harmful practice because it makes more impenetrable the wall of isolation not only between the Security Council and the other Members of the Organization, but also between them and important Secretariat officials.

This is not merely a concern of the delegation of Argentina. In 1994 the Foreign Minister of France, a permanent member of the Security Council and a day-to-day protagonist in world affairs, urged the Council to have greater recourse to public debate in the adoption of its decisions. Similarly, in 1992 a distinguished African Ambassador, representative of the largest regional group in this Assembly, Mr. Mumbengegwi of Zimbabwe, stressed how important it was for any decision adopted by the Council to stand up to the scrutiny of Member States.

The credibility of any organization is at stake whenever it is seen as applying double standards. Democracy is always essential, for our own domestic political systems as well as for the working procedures of the Security Council. For this reason, apart from some of the positive measures to which we referred earlier, transparency will be achieved, first, when the reports of the Secretariat are given in the presence of representatives of sovereign countries, and, secondly, when open meetings of the Council become routine — all this without undermining the consultation process, which is inherent to diplomacy and presumes a certain amount of confidentiality.

Here, I would like to stress that when it comes to transparency and voting methods, Argentina has had the privilege of maintaining a close cooperation with the delegation of New Zealand, which has indicated to me that it associates itself with the points we are now making.

For Member States, which have to fund this Organization, particularly in the context of the negotiation of a more burdensome scale of assessment, it should be understood that the reform process is a single entity. As regards the work of the Security Council, reform is necessary, and Member States have been calling for it for years. Those who, in an attempt to prevent war, designed a multilateral system that would do away with secrecy and non-transparent procedures in international relations are today deemed to be the fathers of collective solidarity. We urge those countries that have inherited the legacy of democracy and transparency to use their prestige and influence to make that legacy truly effective at a time when there is a wish to restructure the institutions of this Organization, without new exclusions and for the equal benefit of all 185 countries.

Mr. Sáenz Biolley (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation is pleased to take part in this debate on the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly on its work from 16 June 1996 to 15 June 1997.

During the second half of the period under consideration, my delegation had the privilege of occupying one of the non-permanent seats reserved in the Security Council for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Costa Rica endeavoured to be a worthy

representative of its Group in that most important organ and to advance the basic values of its own foreign policy: the promotion of human rights, respect for international humanitarian law, respect for the principle of non-intervention, total compliance with the prohibition of the use of force and the promotion of democracy as the ideal means of implementing the right of peoples to self-determination. Certainly, this was no easy task.

The Security Council deals with the most serious and sensitive situations that affect international relations and can threaten international peace and security. However, thanks to active cooperation between its members, it has proved possible to uphold these fundamental values in the spirit and in the practice of that important United Nations organ. Costa Rica remains fully committed to continue promoting these values in its future work within the Security Council.

However, I cannot fail to mention the issue of transparency in the procedures of the Security Council and the format of its report. On transparency in procedures, I should note that there are three concerns that must be respected and considered.

First, there is the perfectly legitimate concern of the membership of the United Nations that the activities of the Security Council be transparent. That concern arises from the fact that, under Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the Security Council is acting on behalf of the membership of the United Nations when it exercises its primary function of maintaining international peace and security. Accordingly, the activities of the Security Council must not and cannot be kept secret from the Members of the Organization.

Secondly, as the membership of the Organization and the Security Council want its activities to be effective, on some occasions confidentiality and privacy are certainly required when the Council takes its decisions. Although this is a controversial point, to my delegation it is a valid one.

Thirdly, the Security Council needs to get the maximum amount of information possible from Member States. This, along with the basic criterion of due process, explains the existence of Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, which allow Member States of the Organization that are not members of the Security Council to participate, without vote, in the Council's discussions. Accordingly, my delegation, together with other non-permanent members of the Security Council, has frequently supported the holding of more public debates.

The concern for greater transparency will only be fully met when the Member States of the Organization can observe all the work of the Security Council. In this connection, it would be desirable — pursuant to Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, as well as rules 37 and 38 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council — if these States could participate in all discussions and be informed of the agenda of meetings far enough in advance. Of course, this would include being supplied with the details of "other matters". The Security Council would thus be kept better informed of the position and views of the international community that it represents.

Unfortunately, the current practice of the Security Council greatly limits the holding of public meetings. This trend must be reversed. There must be more public meetings. In particular, reports of the Secretary-General or his representatives must be presented and discussed at public meetings. In the view of Costa Rica, there is no reason for these discussions to take place during "informal consultations". Moreover, it does not seem acceptable that the Secretary-General should regard certain information as confidential and that the majority of members of the Organization should not have access it. In this regard, it is desirable that all delegations should be informed of the written reports of the Secretary-General. Moreover, my delegation believes that the holding of more public meetings would, to a large extent, resolve the difficulties over the format of the Council's report, because we would have full records of most of the discussions.

On the other hand, my delegation cannot deny that the informal consultations of the Security Council play a very important role in those situations in which the sensitive nature of the issues requires private, confidential discussions, or in which the decision-making process is greatly facilitated by less formal discussions. For these reasons, my delegation is not at present in favour of eliminating such meetings or having records of them or detailed information about the discussions. However, we believe that such meetings should be the exception and no longer be the rule.

My delegation cannot fail to voice its pleasure regarding the Security Council's decision, reflected in the note of the President of the Council of 12 June 1997, to change the format of its report and to include assessments prepared by Presidents of the Council, under their own

responsibility, of the work of the Council during the period in which they held the presidency. We trust that the positive effect of these changes will be seen in the report of the Council for the current period. However, we recognize that these decisions are just the first step towards greater transparency and effectiveness in the work of this most important body. Continued, united efforts are required to ensure that the Security Council can present clear reports to those whom it represents.

Lastly, on behalf of my delegation I would like to thank our friend, Ambassador Juan Somavía, Permanent Representative of Chile, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council, just as we thank him for his very able conduct of the discussions in the Council this month.

Mrs. Ospina (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the Security Council for his introduction of the report for the period from 16 June 1996 to 15 June 1997, contained in document A/52/2.

My country welcomes the efforts made in the Security Council to introduce improvements into its reports.

We note with interest the agreement reached in the Council to the effect that in the future its annual reports will be modified, taking into account the views that have been expressed regarding the current format, as can be seen in chapter 28 B of the report and in paragraph 2 of the note of the President of the Council, document S/1997/451 of 12 June 1997. That note also contains important details about the content of the report in its new format; it will contain information regarding the work of subsidiary organs, including the sanctions committees, as well as information regarding the documentation and working methods and procedures of the Council.

Special mention should be made of paragraph 5 of the note, which says that there will also be attached, as an addendum to the report, brief assessments of the work of the Council, which representatives who have completed their functions as President of the Security Council may wish to prepare, following consultations with members of the Council, for the month during which they presided. It is regrettable that, in accordance with the agreement reached in the Council, these addenda would be the exclusive responsibility of the outgoing Presidents and would not represent the views of the Council. We await with keen interest the addendum to the report containing the Presidents' assessments referred to in paragraph 5. While acknowledging that this is a positive development, we stress the need for the Council to pay due attention to all the aspects mentioned in General Assembly resolution 51/193, especially those contained in operative paragraph 4.

We would like to encourage the Council to continue to improve its reporting system. We also hope that whenever necessary the Council will submit special reports, as mentioned in Article 24, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter and in operative paragraph 5 of resolution 51/193.

The submission of a more substantive report would facilitate its consideration by the Assembly, as recommended by the Open-ended High-level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System.

On the basis of this evaluation, informal consultations will have to be held, following the debate in plenary, to consider the need for and content of the measures which the Assembly will have adopted on the basis of the discussion.

As recommended by the Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, the consideration of the matter should not be deemed concluded. It should remain open so that, if necessary, new discussions can take place in the course of the year, taking into account, *inter alia*, the submission of new reports.

Mr. Vasilyev (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Republic of Belarus attaches great importance to the work of the Security Council as the principal organ of the United Nations responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. Our delegation has listened carefully to the statements made by preceding speakers, which, we feel, contained interesting and constructive proposals on how to improve the work of the Security Council. We agree with most of these suggestions. I will therefore limit myself to making a few brief comments on the preparation and consideration of the reports of the Security Council.

We note the positive changes that have occurred in the preparation of the Security Council's report, which should lead to further improvements in the substantive part by enhancing its analytical nature. We also believe that it would be positive to attach an addendum to the report of the Security Council. This would contain brief assessments of the Council's work by those

representatives who have completed their terms in the presidency. Although these assessments would reflect the personal views of those representatives, this useful start would be a step towards making the Council's report more analytical.

We believe that the Security Council's report could be improved by a more thorough preliminary consideration of its draft reports at open meetings and an analytical description of the most important decisions of the Council, of why these decisions were taken and of the difficulties encountered in the decision-making process. It would also help to implement a procedure whereby the Council's report would be introduced by the President or a representative of one of its permanent members on the basis of rotation from one General Assembly session to another. We believe that this would enhance concrete interaction between the General Assembly and the Council and increase the involvement not only of the Secretariat, but also of Council members, in the process of preparing the reports. Following the discussion of a given item, it would be helpful if the President of the Council, or a representative of one of the permanent members on a rotating basis, were to make a final statement giving some preliminary reaction to the proposals and recommendations made.

I would express the hope that the comments made here will be taken into account in the preparation and discussion of the Security Council's reports in the future and that they will contribute in general to improving its work.

Mr. Takht-Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): Permit me to associate myself with representatives who have spoken before me in expressing appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Somavía, the Permanent Representative of Chile, for presenting the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

My delegation welcomes this opportunity to express its views on the work of the Security Council during the period covered by the report — 16 June 1996 to 15 June 1997. They can be divided into two parts: those relating to the substance and nature of the Council's work and decisions, and those relating to its working and reporting methods and decision-making process.

My delegation recognizes that some progress has been achieved in the latter to render it more transparent and democratic and more in tune with the fiduciary character of Security Council. As many speakers before me have pointed out, more needs to be done — a subject to which I will return.

In our view, the decisions of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security — the subject of Part I of the present report — will gain further legitimacy, authority and credibility if they are fully supported by the general membership and seen by the conflicting parties as such.

In the current circumstances, when Members of the Organization can provide valuable input to the Council without the old constraints of the bipolar world of the cold-war era, the Security Council should be able to take advantage of the weight of the General Assembly to request recommendations, in accordance with Article 12 of the Charter, with regard to the dispute or situation with which the Council is seized. Along the same chain of thought, attempts should be made to see how Articles 10 and 11 could be interpreted alternatively in the light of current realities to give effect to the role of the General Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has maintained that resort to Chapter VII should always be made with extreme caution. As the main body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council should enhance its contacts in a sustained manner with conflicting parties through every possible means. The perception of a Security Council that energetically seeks peaceful solutions through diplomacy is by far stronger and more efficient than that which views the Security Council as a heavy-handed body that readily seeks coercive and interventionist measures to an international problem because it lacks vision, patience, evenhandedness or all of these.

In cases of any foreign military involvement by a State or a group of States in another State that has been originated to implement a Security Council resolution adopted under Chapter VII, the Council must continue to be actively engaged and must assume full responsibility for the manner in which its decisions are implemented. The Security Council must avoid the newly preferred approach of delegating authority to structures outside of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. Such an approach, when used repeatedly, will erode the authority and credibility of the Council and of the Organization as a whole.

Going back to the working and reporting methods of the Council, I must say that the current report to the General Assembly falls short of what is expected of the Council in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter. The report clearly fails to deliver what it promises in the introduction: to be a guide to the activities of the Security Council. How are the non-members of the Council to be guided by the report when it offers no analysis of the decisions of the Council, nor of its problems and successes, nor of the lessons learned from its past activities. The report is a compilation of published documents, which is largely useful for those interested in an historical study of the Security Council.

Many speakers before me have pointed out the shortcomings of the report, and we fully agree with them. Let me draw attention to one more that may be non-conventional. Part III of the report, which relates to the work of the Military Staff Committee, consists of only three full lines. In light of the need for transparency and effective communication between the Council and the General Assembly, I am not sure that the provision of some broad information on the topics of the 26 meetings the Military Staff Committee held would have undermined the integrity of the Committee's work.

In our view, the Security Council would enhance its credibility were it to be responsive and forthcoming to the views expressed by the general membership in terms of adopting further measures for the democratization and transparency of its working methods and communication with the General Assembly. The report of the Council needs to be improved to become more analytical, with assessment of past activities, particularly those relating to peacekeeping operations.

The report also needs to contain information on informal consultations of the whole, where most important decisions are made. One way to do that is to annex an account of the welcome practice of briefing by the presidency of the Council for the non-members of the Security Council. Such an addition to the report would also serve as an inducement to accord some structure and more substance to the briefings. The same approach could be adopted for the briefings by the Chairmen of the subsidiary committees of the Security Council.

Consideration should also be given to the possibility of members of the Security Council holding regular briefings for members of their respective geographical groups.

The General Assembly should develop, in appropriate working groups and in the light of contemporary realities, a guideline to be recommended to the Security Council on the number of reports it should receive and on the meaning of "when necessary" in terms of special reports in the context of Article 24.

Democratization, transparency, fairness and, above all, practical considerations in the working methods of the Council require a broader application of Article 31 of the Charter to allow the participation of a State which is not a member of the Security Council in its informal consultations, when it is considering an issue that directly affects the interest of that State.

The same ideals will require that more meetings of the Council be held in an official format. Meetings that have an informative character, such as briefings by the Secretary-General or other United Nations representatives, are a good start.

The Security Council functions on behalf of the general membership of the United Nations, and as such it needs the full support of the General Assembly to effectively fulfil its mandate. The General Assembly looks forward, as manifested in the current consideration of the Council's report, to a healthy dialogue and relations, as well as an effective and sustained means of communication with the Council. The Security Council should too.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the report (A/52/2) of the Security Council?

It was so decided.

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 11.

Announcement by the President

The President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the following activities.

The 1997 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, 4 and 5 November, in the morning of both days.

The announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1998 programme of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees will take place on Friday, 7 November, in the morning.

• The Special International Meeting in Support of the United Nations Inter-Agency Programme of International Assistance to Areas Affected by the Chernobyl Disaster will be held on Tuesday, 25 November, in the morning.

The announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1998 programmes of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East will take place on Tuesday, 2 December, in the morning.

Members are requested to consult the *Journal* announcements for these activities for further details.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

United Nations A/52/PV.40

General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

Official Records

40th plenary meeting
Thursday, 30 October 1997, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 15

Elections to fill vacancies in principal organs

(b) Election of eighteen members of the Economic and Social Council

The President: This morning the General Assembly will proceed to the election of 18 members of the Economic and Social Council to replace those members whose term of office expires on 31 December 1997.

The 18 outgoing members are Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Colombia, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, South Africa, the Sudan, Thailand, Uganda and the United States of America.

I should like to remind members of the Assembly that, as of 1 January 1998, the following States will continue to be represented on the Economic and Social Council: Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chile, China, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Djibouti, El Salvador, Finland, France, Gabon, the Gambia, Germany, Guyana, Iceland, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Zambia. The names of these 36 States should therefore not appear on the ballots.

In accordance with paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 2847 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971, and taking into account the number of States which will remain members of the Council after 1 January 1998, the 18 members should be elected as follows: five from African States, four from Asian States, two from Eastern European States, three from Latin American and Caribbean States and four from Western European and other States. The ballot papers reflect this pattern.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the number of candidates, not exceeding the number of seats to be filled, receiving the greatest number of votes and a two-thirds majority of those present and voting will be declared elected. In the case of a tie vote for a remaining seat, there will be a restricted ballot limited to those candidates which have obtained an equal number of votes.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to this procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot, and there shall be no nominations.

Regarding candidatures, I have been informed by the Chairmen of the regional groups that, for the five vacant seats from among the African States, the five endorsed candidates are Algeria, the Comoros, Lesotho, Mauritius and Sierra Leone.

97-86365 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Required two-thirds majority:	115
Number of votes obtained:	
Peru	71
Saint Lucia	55
Guatemala	46

The President: Since no candidate obtained the required two-thirds majority in the previous ballot, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We must therefore proceed to another unrestricted ballot.

This sixth round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Ballot papers marked "D" will now be distributed. May I request representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "D", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "D" bearing more than one name will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Silva (Angola), Mr. Thinley (Bhutan), Mr. Jerónimo (Portugal) and Mrs. Kimliková (Slovakia), acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The President: I call on the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on a point of order.

Mr. Lewis (Antigua and Barbuda): I have been assured by the delegations of Guatemala, Peru, Saint Lucia and other members of the group of Latin American and Caribbean States that the representative of Guatemala had sought to announce that he was withdrawing from the present round of voting as the result of an agreement made among the three candidates. Unfortunately, the President was unaware of this, and I would consequently request that the ballots collected for the sixth round be declared void and that new ballots be distributed on the clear understanding that the two candidates are Peru and Saint Lucia.

The President: I call on the representative of Guatemala on a point of order.

Mr. Martini Herrera (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As soon as my delegation heard the results of this morning's first round of voting, I raised my country's name plate in an attempt to secure the attention of the President so that I could withdraw our candidature. This was in accordance with our agreement with the other two candidates.

Guatemala sincerely thanks friendly countries for their support and for their expression of confidence that small countries and countries seeking the equitable distribution of important seats in the Organization can also be elected to such posts. Guatemala has always respected, and will continue to respect, voting arrangements with other countries, and now withdraws its candidature in favour of that of Saint Lucia, the candidate endorsed by the Caribbean Community.

The President: I call on the representative of Swaziland on a point of order.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): I do not know if this is a point of order or a request for clarification. While my delegation sympathizes fully with the statements just made, it would have been proper for them to have been made before we started voting. As it is, I am concerned that the voting should be guided by the rules of procedure. My delegation would be happy if the President would reflect before a decision is taken to discount the votes we have cast.

I sympathize with the President: we seem to be conversing with certain specific delegations, which, in my view, is not in keeping with the traditions of the General Assembly. My ballot is in the box; I have made my decision; and the positions recently expressed are likely to distort the action of my delegation. We are prepared to jump on any bandwagon, but this is setting a bad precedent.

The President: The proposals made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and of Guatemala were made during a vote, and in accordance with the rules of procedure, it is only points of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting that are permissible at that time. We must, however, be guided not only by the rules of procedure, but by logic.

Therefore, I wish to make the following ruling, somewhat in keeping with the statement of the representative of Swaziland: that we proceed to count the votes, announce the result of the voting, and then proceed to a new round of voting taking into consideration the statements just made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and of Guatemala. This would be in

accordance with the rules of procedure. May I take it that this is the wish of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The meeting was suspended at noon and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	170
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	170
Abstentions:	2
Number of members voting:	168
Required two-thirds majority:	112
Number of votes obtained:	
Peru	76
Saint Lucia	65
Guatemala	27

The President: Since no candidate obtained the required two-thirds majority in the previous ballot, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. We must therefore proceed to another unrestricted ballot, taking into consideration the statements made by the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda and of Guatemala.

This seventh round of balloting is in accordance with rule 94 of the rules of procedure.

Ballot papers marked "D" will now be distributed. May I request representatives to write on the ballot papers marked "D", for the Latin American and Caribbean States, the name of the one State for which they wish to vote. Ballot papers marked "D" bearing more than one name will be declared invalid.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Silva (Angola), Mr. Thinley (Bhutan), Mr. Jerónimo (Portugal) and Mrs. Kimliková (Slovakia), acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 12.25 p.m. and resumed at 12.40 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	168
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	168
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	167
Required two-thirds majority:	112
Number of votes obtained:	
Saint Lucia	89
Peru	78

The President: Since no candidate obtained the required two-thirds majority in the previous ballot, there still remains one seat to be filled from among the Latin American and Caribbean States. In accordance with the rules of procedure we should continue with a series of restricted ballots. This is in accordance with rule 94, which states that if three such unrestricted ballots are inconclusive the next three ballots shall be restricted to the candidates who obtained the greatest number of votes in the third of the unrestricted ballots.

However, in view of the lateness of the hour, I propose that we postpone further balloting to a later date to be announced. As there is no objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Group B — Asian States

Number of ballot papers:	175
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	175
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	175
Required two-thirds majority:	117
Number of votes obtained:	
India	111
Malaysia	94
Oman	83
Qatar	56

Group C — Eastern European States

Number of ballot papers:	175
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	175
Abstentions:	3
Number of members voting:	172
Required two-thirds majority:	115
Number of votes obtained:	
Poland	98
Georgia	74

Group D — Latin American and Caribbean States

Number of ballot papers:	175
Number of invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	175
Abstentions:	0
Number of members voting:	175
Required two-thirds majority:	117
Number of votes obtained:	
Brazil	119
Peru	99
Guatemala	78
Saint Lucia	42

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority, Brazil was elected a member of the Economic and Social Council for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 1998.

The President: I congratulate the State that has been elected a member of the Economic and Social Council.

There remain two seats from among the Asian States, one from among the Eastern European States and one from among the Latin American and Caribbean States to be filled.

In accordance with the rules of procedure, we should continue with the series of restricted ballots. However, in view of the late hour, I propose that we postpone further balloting until 3 p.m.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.